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MACAULAY'S

ESSAYS ON MILTON AND ADDISON

EDITED

WITH NOTES AND AN INTRODUCTION

BY

JAMES GREENLEAF CROSWELL, A.B.

HEAD-MASTER OF THE BREARLEY SCHOOL; FORMERLY ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF GREEK IN HARVARD UNIVERSITY

NEW YORK

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

LONDON AND BOMBAY

1900

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FIRST EDITION, AUGUST, 1897
REPRINTED, OCTOBER, 1899
JANUARY, 1900

TROW DIRECTORY
PRINTING AND BOOKBINDING COMPANY
NEW YORK

PREFACE

It is hard for an editor of a book designed for formal study to determine precisely what parts of the learning that has gathered about his subject should be offered directly, by way of annotation, to young students. Two methods of treatment at once suggest themselves. He may annotate the text very sparingly, on the assumption that an intelligent boy knows enough to read ordinary English prose literature understandingly, and should be forced to find out for himself the meaning of words or allusions that he does not comprehend. Or he may annotate profusely, on the much sounder assumption that boys and girls are not living dictionaries and encyclopædias, and scarcely ought to be expected to interrupt reading which they are encouraged to enjoy in order to search various volumes for information that might just as well be put at once before them. Both extremes the editor of the present volume has tried to avoid. He has endeavored to give the pupil such facts as will enable him to read rapidly and understandingly; he has endeavored also to stimulate in the pupil an intelligent curiosity with regard to matters worth further investigation and further knowledge. It is his belief, however, that in the editing of text-books, as in all other parts of the teacher's delicate task, unchecked devotion to any theory of work, sound though it be, may very well lead to disaster to some pupils. He hopes, therefore, that those of his colleagues who use this book will understand that he has tried to prepare it for various uses, thinking of different classes

of pupils, at different periods of ripeness. If the annotation is for any purpose too full, it is far easier to neglect any excess than to supply a real and painful deficiency that might arise in reading Macaulay under the ordinary conditions of the classroom.

This edition of Macaulay's essays follows the authoritative text, of which Longmans, Green, and Co. are the publishers.

J. G. C.

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INTRODUCTION

[The essays on Milton and Addison form a convenient introduction to the study of Macaulay's writings; they serve also the immediate purpose of this series, by illustrating the lives of two authors whose works are to be studied during the course preparatory for college. Moreover, they have a general interest as being well-constructed and brilliantly successful "review-articles." This type of essay-writing one may almost assert to have been invented by the Edinburgh Reviewers, of which famous coterie Macaulay was one of the greatest, and these are classic specimens of the type.

Macaulay was not one of the founders of that periodical. It originated in 1802 among a number of young men of the generation before him, whose interests—social, literary, and political,—brought them together in Edinburgh. The most famous were Jeffrey, Sydney Smith, the witty divine who instigated the enterprise, Henry Brougham, and Francis Horner. They were Liberals or "Whigs" in politics, and full of fight for their side in all public questions. The merit of the work of these talented young "journalists," the novelty of the enterprise, and what was thought to be the daring of the views expressed in these articles on various questions of the day, made the *Edinburgh* a rallying point for the popular party in English politics, and gave to the "Buff and Blue" magazine a wide circulation. The Tory party started the *Quarterly Review* to meet it, and the *Westminster Review* was begun later by a new set of young "Radicals," who found the *Edinburgh* too slow for them; both thus paying it the flattery of imitation. Even to the present day the form of these essays is, to a great degree, followed in certain periodicals, especially in this particular, which it will interest young students to notice.

It was thought needful by the *Edinburgh* writers, while they were treating their subjects, in truth, in the most general way, to connect their discursive harangues with a criticism of some definite book lately published. Thus, Macaulay begins his essay on Milton with some

rather random remarks about a book of Milton's, and his essay on Addison with a hasty criticism of Miss Aikin's "Life of Addison." But once he gets into his article a little way, the reviewer abandons his intended task, and proceeds to develop his own opinions about the character and conduct of Milton and Addison from the standpoint of his own party, the "Whigs of 1832." In the process of treating these questions, he rambles off into short excursions upon kindred subjects, wholly ignoring the book review, and giving himself the privilege of unburdening his soul upon any political questions which interest him, or entering upon literary criticism or general topics of the day, as we should do in modern magazine articles, which are more frankly devoted to general discussions. Other likenesses and differences between the *Edinburgh* articles and their modern equivalents will interest the student of English literature in its present manifestations, but they are not essential to the understanding and appreciation of the text, and space does not allow us to discuss them here.]

1. THE Essay on Milton was published in the *Edinburgh Review* in August, 1825. The author was born in 1800, and was thus at the date of publication just twenty-five years old. Except for some papers in *Knight's Quarterly*, one of which, "Conversation between Mr. Abraham Cowley and Mr. John Milton touching the Great Civil War," covers some of the ground of this essay, there was practically as yet nothing of Macaulay's in print. Yet, though it was thus an experiment from a comparatively untried man, this article proved to be one of those astonishing successes which now and then befall new authors. Like Lord Byron, the young Macaulay "awoke one morning and found himself famous." He became at once after the publication of this essay one of the best-known men in England. "The family breakfast-table in Bloomsbury," says his sister, "was covered with cards of invitation to dinner from every quarter of London." He was made a friend by men of letters, scholars, and statesmen; and from this time his life ran on in that almost unbroken current of agreeable and well-rewarded industry which has been made the subject of one of the most charming

biographies in the world, Sir George Trevelyan's "Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay."

2. As we are thus dealing with what was practically Macaulay's first great work, we might naturally expect to find in it some of the characteristic weaknesses of a novice. Macaulay himself, in the preface to the collection of his essays made in 1843, found this fault with it. "The criticism on Milton," says he, "which was written when the author was just from college, contains scarcely a paragraph such as his matured judgment approves, and remains overloaded with faulty and ungraceful ornament." Now, blemishes of this sort, to be sure, do appear. Matthew Arnold, for instance, well objects to the description of Milton's "conception of love" (page 45) that it is, when analyzed, nothing but nonsense; Mr. Frederic Harrison well objects to his description of the Restoration (page 70) that it is really too much to say of the careless and good-natured Charles II. that he was "a cruel idol propitiated by the best blood of England's children." Any careful reader of the essay will find almost anywhere other similar exaggerations of phrase. It is not true, for instance, that Milton died in a "hovel" or in "disgrace;" nor would Milton's daughters have "contested" with anybody the privilege of reading Greek to him. But, on the whole, considered as the work of a "young man just from college," the essay is particularly free from the faults of youth. Such faults as it has are at worst pleasing faults, characteristic of Macaulay's best writing all his life long. It is full of vivid color, smartly written, and showing already the certain touch of a master of historical composition.

3. But there are criticisms which have been made upon the essay with more justice than these. For one thing, critics have said that, considered as a literary study, it does not contain a thorough discussion of Milton's work. Very

important poems are in fact ignored entirely. They complain of a memorial of Milton which does not mention "The Ode on the Nativity" at all, that poem which Hallam called "the most beautiful poem in the English language," or even allude to "Lycidas," which Pattison says is "the high-water mark of English Poesy and of Milton's own production." Then again, to other critics, the tone of perpetual eulogy of Milton's conduct seems over-strained and almost too contentious. The thing sounds like an argument in a debate, wherein the reader will finally be expected to give a vote. But there is a special reason in Macaulay's situation not only for the narrow scope of the treatment of Milton but also for the argumentative strain.

4. Political prejudice in Macaulay's day still interfered with men's estimate of John Milton. The judgment of society in 1825, which is reflected in the Waverley Novels, like "Woodstock," for instance, was the judgment which might be passed upon Milton's work by a good English Tory, in a day when, "a youth of Tory family," says Lord Cockburn, "who was discovered to have a leaning to the doctrines of the opposition, was considered a lost son." Nothing contributed more to strengthen and to prolong the unjust views of the Tories about Milton than the universal reading of the life of Milton composed by the great eighteenth-century critic, Dr. Samuel Johnson. It was so good a book that in 1825 it was, so to speak, the regular authoritative source of information about Milton. But Dr. Johnson was haunted by the tradition of the cavaliers that any rebel against the king must have been either a self-deceived hypocrite or else "dishonest." Apparently he thought this evil thing about Milton. No one can imagine without reading the book how readily this extraordinary biographer takes any chance to discredit the motives of Milton's acts, and how much this general prejudice against the poet's political conduct blinds him to the liter-

ary quality of Milton's work. Furthermore, the Doctor's judgment of Milton's work, even where he forgets his politics, is warped by continual reference to conventional rules which he considered authoritative principles in æsthetics. There is a Toryism even in his literary sympathies. A few quotations from the "Life" will exhibit this odd tone, and will explain why we hear in the Essay so much about Dr. Johnson, as well as about "certain critics," which phrase usually means Dr. Johnson.

5. First, Dr. Johnson makes all the use he can of doubtful notices in Milton's biographers to the possible discredit of the poet's character. A good example is his emphatic reference to Aubrey's incorrect statement that Milton was "whipt" at college, or, in Johnsonese, "suffered the public indignity of corporal correction." Secondly, Dr. Johnson twists the most innocent and honorable acts into causes of offence and ridicule when he recalls Milton's relations to Church and King. For instance, when the civil war broke out, Milton gave up his journey to Italy, closed the "sweet-scented manuscript of youth," and returned at once to give his life to the Puritan cause. He became, as Macaulay says, "the devoted and eloquent literary champion" of the principles of liberty. While thus contending on the side of Parliament by his pen, he supported himself by teaching a few pupils. "He taught," says Philips, one of the scholars, his sister's son, "only relations and the sons of gentlemen that were his friends; he never set up for a publick school to teach all the young fry of a parish." At the present day this act is justly considered one of his best titles to our respect and admiration. But listen to the Tory Doctor. "Let not our veneration for Milton," says Johnson, "forbid us to look with some degree of merriment on great promises and small performance, on the man who hastens home because his countrymen are contending for their liberty, and when he reaches the scene

of action vapours away his patriotism in a private boarding school." Again, Milton's pamphlets doubtless were written in a savage tone. No editorial contests in any political controversy of our day could now be conducted so fiercely. "Milton's capacity for emotion," says Pattison, "when once he became champion of a cause, could not be contained within the bounds of ordinary speech. It breaks into terrific blasts of vituperation, beneath which the very language creaks, as the timbers of a ship in a storm." But Johnson's word for this Miltonic wrath is "malignity." "Hell grows darker at his frown," quotes the Doctor.

6. These hostile feelings might be pardoned to the devout Toryism of Johnson if he had kept them for the life and political acts of Milton. What Macaulay could not pardon was the jealous tone of his literary criticism. Who, indeed, could accept calmly this remark, applied in Johnson's "Life" to the great Sonnet XXIII. ? "His wife died, and he honoured her memory with a poor sonnet." Or this, of the splendid testimonial to Cromwell ? "Cæsar, when he assumed the perpetual dictatorship, had not more servile or more elegant flattery." Or this, about Lycidas ? "The diction is harsh, the rhymes uncertain, the numbers unpleasing. Its form is that of a pastoral ; easy, vulgar, and therefore disgusting." The sonnets Dr. Johnson naturally hated ; they are full of Puritanism. But he might have found better words to say of them than these : "Of the best [sonnets] it can only be said they are not bad, and perhaps only the eighth and twenty-first are truly entitled to this slender commendation." Even over "Paradise Lost," whose excellences are generally commended by him, though accounted for rather curiously, Johnson has to quarrel with the poet for what he maintains to be his illogical confusions of spirit and matter and his incongruous pictures of angelic substance. Finally, Milton's splendid style, which Matthew Arnold named the

only specimen in our literature of the "grand style" of Homer and Dante, Dr. Johnson asserts is founded "on a perverse and pedantic principle." All this is certainly the product of a critical faculty judging through fogs of political prejudice and under the iron rules of dogmatic critical tradition.

7. But the controversial purposes of Macaulay in the article on Milton published in the great Whig review went further than the holding of a critical tournament with Dr. Johnson. All the second half of the essay has little to do with literature. It is devoted to the condemnation of the Stuarts, and the eulogy of the Puritans, and it has a warmth reflected from Macaulay's present political sympathies, and from the new-born ardor for freedom of the young English Liberals of 1825. Under cover of a historical study of John Milton, Macaulay has here written a very good Whig party pamphlet. A few words, therefore, in explanation of the contemporary political situation of 1825 will make the spirit of the latter part of the essay clearer and perhaps more interesting to readers of the present day.

8. The year 1825 was a year full of storm in many quarters of the sky. "Those mighty principles which have worked their way into the depths of American forests, which have roused Greece from the slavery and degradation of two thousand years, and which, from one end of Europe to the other, have kindled an unquenchable fire in the hearts of the oppressed and loosed the knees of the oppressors with an unwonted fear," were likewise working in the hearts of young Englishmen of Macaulay's age. Two opposite ideals of government, likened by Macaulay to the two gods of the Persian theology, Oromasdes and Arimanes, were standing face to face in Europe as they stood in the days of the Stuarts. In England the party of popular government was represented by the

Whigs and the Liberal section of the Tory party acting under Canning; the party of firm monarchical principles was represented by the King (George IV.), the Prime Minister, Lord Liverpool,—the older Tory party, containing far the larger part of English society. In Europe at large the principle of firm despotic authority was then maintained by the "Holy Alliance." This was a union formed by the monarchs of Russia, Austria, and Prussia, and largely directed by the policy of Prince Metternich, the Austrian minister. This alliance had been first made after Waterloo, when there fell upon all Europe a great desire for peace. Strong government under well-constituted authority seemed desirable then to every nation. All were weary of the upturnings of the French Revolution. These monarchs guaranteed that in all Europe there should be no more disturbance. "Useful or necessary changes in legislation," they said in a famous circular letter, "and in the administration of states ought only to emanate from the free-will and the intelligent and well-weighed conviction of those whom God has rendered responsible for power." This was a tone acceptable even to English policy in that year. But opposition was sure to come soon, and, oddly enough, the first opposition to the principles of the alliance occurred in Spain. Spain had been restored, after the overthrow of Napoleon, to its old Bourbon king, Ferdinand the Seventh. Ferdinand had promptly reversed all measures of progress taken in that kingdom since 1812, and thereby quarrelled with his liberal subjects. Serious rioting resulted; in spite of the efforts of the Holy Alliance in the king's cause, neither side was completely successful. The infection of revolt spread to the Spanish colonies in America. They seized the moment to rebel against Spain, and under the leadership of men like the great Bolivar, in the "depths of the American forests," the colonies broke away from the mother-coun-

try and founded the present South American republics. All this movement was watched in England with much sympathy for the insurgents. Young Englishmen even served in the armies and navies of the South American rebels. Next came Italy. In Naples also there was at this time an absolute monarch of Spanish descent. Here, also, the people rebelled and secured a constitution. But, though not successful in Spanish affairs, the Holy Alliance succeeded in Italy in crushing the popular movement. Austrian troops were sent in and took away, in the name of religion and good government, the hopes of freedom which the Neapolitans and Sicilians had begun to enjoy. Still another uprising was in Macaulay's mind as he wrote the story of Milton. Greece had just revolted against her Turkish masters. Even while this essay was penned, the heroic defence of Missolonghi was taking place; and with the enthusiastic support of many cultured and high-spirited young men from all the nations of the Christian world, Greece was just winning for herself her title to independence. With these great struggles all over the world going on before his eyes, there was a peculiar zest for Macaulay, who loved to identify present politics and past history, in discussing just then the great historic conflicts of the Stuarts and the people of England over the same momentous problems of government which were then agitating the nations of Continental Europe. Lastly, Macaulay wrote this essay with a heart full of interest in a great political movement in England itself, namely, the effort making in 1825 for the relief of his Catholic fellow-citizens from their civil disabilities. The laws against Catholics in Great Britain, and still more in Ireland, since the time of William and Anne, had been, as is well known, most severe. Catholics were excluded from the succession to the crown of England after the Revolution of 1688. But they were also excluded from the right to sit

in Parliament, or to hold any magistracy or receive degrees at the universities. Irish Catholics were practically put in absolute subjection to a Protestant Parliament supported by English arms in Dublin. This Parliament, during the eighteenth century, ordained that no Catholic might carry arms, buy or inherit real estate, or own a horse worth more than £5. Under such laws the country was almost ruined commercially and socially, though the Catholic church rather increased in numbers. Now in 1825 Ireland was struggling to obtain some relief. The country had been agitated by this effort for a generation. Ireland was now divided into two camps, the Orange lodges of Protestants on one side, the Catholic Association and the Ribbonmen on the other. The two sides vied with each other in hatred and outrage. The English nation divided over them. Liberals in both parties took up the cause of Catholic emancipation. Lord Althorp, afterward the champion of the Reform Bill, and the Whig Lord Lansdowne, who, in 1830, helped Macaulay into Parliament, were endeavoring once more to obtain civil equality for their Catholic fellow-citizens. The "unbending Tories," like Wellington and Peel, on the other side, resisted change, quoting, to defend their ideas of the proper method of dealing with Irish Catholics, the example of the great Whig hero, William the Third. But a bill for the relief of the Catholics had just passed the Commons. It was, however, rejected in the Lords under the influence of the Tories. The Duke of York, at that time a possible heir to the throne, came down and made a speech on the extreme Protestant side, which was very influential in defeating the bill. The "victory" of the anti-Catholics was celebrated with rejoicing. The Protestants had a public dinner in London in honor of it, at which the Duke of York drank the "glorious and immortal memory of William III." amid wild cheering.

9. In a year of such political excitement we can imagine the feelings which were animating the young author of this paper. Such are the feelings we must in a measure understand if we would appreciate his work rightly. We must not gauge it solely as a contribution to the study of Milton's place in English literature. We must be prepared to find political sympathies getting uppermost in the author's interest in the subject, and we shall consequently find that his political paragraphs, as, for example, the eulogy of the Puritans on page 78, are far the best part of the essay. Let us freely admit that there is much justification for this way of treating Milton. With all due respect to English literature, in which Milton's poetry is so bright a glory, the making of verses has not been the only service or even the chief service of the English race to mankind. When the final account of things is made up, England will be able to say of her history something in the strain of Virgil's proud verses about Rome in the Sixth Book of the "Æneid." Whatever artistic and literary glories other nations may have had, the English have built the greatest political structures of popular representative government in all the world. And it has been again and again due to Anglo-Saxon history, in both hemispheres, especially of the last three hundred years, that "government of the people, for the people, by the people" has not perished from the earth. So that Milton, the Puritan Secretary of the Commonwealth, may well be remembered in any critical account of him as gratefully as Milton the poet and scholar. As Heine, the German poet, said of himself, Macaulay's essay seems justly to say of Milton, "Lay not laurel-leaves on that coffin, but a sword. For he was a good soldier in the warfare of the liberation of humanity."

10. John Milton had three threads of three widely different destinies spun into one for him by the Fates. The first part of his life, his boyhood and family history, his

study and private reading, connected him with the England of his father, with music and song, with the happy singers of Elizabeth's day, whose influence is so plain in his early poetry. The second part of his life, his education at school and college, tied him to the Puritans, to the "rigorous teachers who seized his youth," moulding his life by the high religious purposes of that noble but unhappy party; and the third cord, red and dismal, running through the life and occupations of his manhood, bound him to the troubled life of political dissension in the blood-stained England of Charles and of Cromwell. In "Paradise Lost" one sees at last these influences erecting together an harmonious whole of unique beauty. That is a great song of a true-born singer relating in the imagery of an immortal epic the origin of all the world's sorrows as a blind Puritan of the lost Commonwealth had had knowledge of them. The first part of his life promised him only happiness in the joy of his chosen art of poetry. He was born in 1608, and like Chaucer, Spenser, Cowley, and Keats, in the city of London itself. The name of the house of his birth was the "Spread Eagle." It was in Bread Street, Cheapside; but like the other houses which Milton lived in, it exists no longer. Though not the eldest, he was the very dearest son of his father, described as "an ingeniose man delighting in musique," who gave him a careful education at St. Paul's school and at home also. In books John Milton was from the tenderest years a student. His brother relates that "when he went to schoole, when he was very younge, he studied very hard and sate up very late: commonly till twelve or one o'clock at night, and his father ordered the mayde to sitt up for him; and in those yeares [10] he composed many copies of verses which might well become a ripe age. And was a very hard student in the University and performed all his exercises there with very good applause." He went to Christ's College in

the Puritan University of Cambridge at the age of seventeen, remaining there till he was twenty-four. The boys there called him "The Lady" because of his fair complexion, graceful appearance, and a certain haughty delicacy of taste and habit. While here he wrote among other things the great "Ode on the Nativity," the "Sonnet on arriving at the Age of Twenty-three," and a good deal of Latin verse. After leaving college he had been meaning to take orders. But he felt himself at that time unable to become a minister of the English Church, as his family had apparently expected. He was not in harmony with the church government of that day, and he already cherished the purpose of giving his life to the making of great poetry. So he retired to his father's country-house in Horton, and lived in quiet, reading classic and Italian authors, and writing. What he wrote here was already of the greatest poetic excellence. If his life had gone on as it began at Horton, he would have ranked among the sweetest of the lyric poets of England, with a strong resemblance to the singers of the previous generation, the beautiful minstrels of the age of Elizabeth. In these days of happiness "L'Allegro," "Il Penseroso," and "Comus" came into being; and the beautiful Latin poem to his father; and finally, just as he was going on his Italian journey, he composed, as a memorial to a dead college friend, the great "Lycidas."

11. After three years in the country at Horton, Milton spent fifteen months in Italy. He enjoyed, we may believe, one of the happiest periods of his life there. He visited Paris, Nice, Genoa, Leghorn, Pisa, stayed two months (August and September) in Florence, where occurred his famous visit to the blind Galileo, "a prisoner to the Inquisition, for thinking in Astronomy otherwise than as the Franciscan and Dominican licensers taught." He met in Florence many young Italian literary men, who became his

courteous admirers and friends. From Florence he went to Rome for two months more. From Rome he went to Naples, where he became the guest of Manso, the old Marquis of Villa. There is an allusion on page 17 of the essay to the beautiful Latin poem he wrote out of gratitude to the marquis. And then he was just going to Sicily and to Greece when the news from England came which, one may say, ended this early joyous chapter in his life, and cost English literature the poet of the "Comus," if it gave her the poet of "Paradise Lost," and "Samson Agonistes." He turned back to his distracted native land to enter the great civil conflict already beginning there. On his way back to England he passed a few weeks again in Rome, and again two months in Florence. Then he went to Geneva by way of Venice, Verona, and Milan, staying a few days with his friends the Diodati family in Switzerland. In August, 1639, he was at home again, living at first by himself as a quiet student. But he never wrote after this with the sweet tone of the matchless verses of his youth. "His piping took a troubled sound" in the uproar of conflict which was arising in England over the issues between king and parliament.

12. It is going to be necessary, if we are intelligently to follow Macaulay's discussion of Milton's conduct, which occupies the whole latter half of this essay, to muster up all our information about the English history of the seventeenth century, which our author treats as a matter of common knowledge. The best book, perhaps, for such a purpose would be Macaulay's own "History of England," reading at least the first two chapters. Macaulay's essay on Hallam's "Constitutional History" is as good. The great work upon this period, too large to read hastily, is to be seen in the stately volumes of Gardiner's "History of the Civil War." If that is inaccessible, one may read Gardiner's contribution to the Epoch Series, "The Puritan

Revolution." The two beautiful chapters of John Richard Green's "Short History," called "Puritan England," and "The Revolution," will help one exceedingly who has not much time to give to searching in larger books, and desires the most modern and impartial view. For Macaulay, whatever he may be, is not impartial in judging of seventeenth-century history.

Macaulay treats the whole question of Milton's conduct in this period of his life somewhat peculiarly. He does not discuss its details; he takes up instead the "naked constitutional question," whether that party which resisted and finally executed the king was legally and morally right. This question he does not decide on its merits, but by an appeal to the action of the Englishmen of the next generation, who expelled from the throne James II. If this revolution of 1688 was justified (and no Englishman of modern days will deny that it was justified), then, to justify the party which drove Charles I. from the throne, Macaulay has but to show that Charles I. did the same things in 1649 that James II. did in 1688. We may here consider for a moment the well-known story of the Great Rebellion in order to follow intelligently, as we have said, Macaulay's argument upon this topic.

13. Charles I. entered upon his reign in 1625, inheriting a fatal legacy from his father, James I. The first two Stuarts held the doctrine of the "divine right of kings" in a peculiarly extravagant form. They believed, as Macaulay says in his history, that God "regarded hereditary monarchy, as opposed to other forms of government, with peculiar favour, that the rule of succession through eldest sons was a divine institution, that no human power could deprive the legitimate prince of his rights; that the laws by which the prerogative was limited were merely concessions which the sovereign had freely made and might at his pleasure resume; that any treaty into which a king might

enter with his people was merely a declaration of his present intentions and not a contract of which performance could be demanded." This theory, says Macaulay, was never one of the "fundamental laws of England." On the contrary, it contradicted many facts of English history. But it found many advocates among those who were at that time about the king, and, in particular, made rapid progress among the clergy of the Established Church. On the other hand, it enraged and disgusted most Englishmen, who, under the influence of the Protestant religions of that century, were coming to have more and more respect for the new divine right of the people, and the right of private judgment. It was the baleful influence of this theory, that a king was a person so above the law that he could not make a binding contract with his people, which stained Charles's name with the reproach of tyranny and faithlessness. He was, though in other relations in life a high-minded gentleman, in the exercise of his office as monarch, as his people soon found, perfidious on principle. When the parties divided over that question in the reign of Charles, the party of the Parliament stood up at first only for the privileges of the subject established by law; while the party of the king supported only the royal "prerogative," that is, the general powers which a monarch possesses, not to be stated or defined by law. Both sides had something of right. The English king certainly had always had such general powers. He could, for example, convoke and dissolve Parliaments at such dates as he thought fit; he commanded the armies of England; he treated alone with foreign powers. Such irresponsible powers are always needed under any form of government and were known in England as the "prerogatives" of the sovereign. But the Parliament rightly maintained that there were limitations to the "prerogative" of very ancient date in England. First, they said, no English

king ought to legislate without the consent of Parliament; secondly, the king could impose no taxes without the consent of Parliament; thirdly, he was, after all, with all his prerogatives, bound to conduct his administration in accordance with the laws of the land, and if he broke these laws, his advisers and agents were responsible. These were the opinions of the young Milton, and of nearly all the Puritan side. But the king held opposite views; and the difference soon appeared in practical politics. At his first entry into power Charles had quarrelled with his people over a question of foreign policy; and the Parliament, to bring him down, refused supplies. Charles then attempted to raise money for the expenses of his government, without any taxes from Parliament, by forced loans, and by other devices, and tried to put down opposition by arbitrary imprisonments. In 1628 Parliament retorted by sending him the "Petition of Right." This document begged (1) prohibition of all forms of taxation, forced loans, "benevolences," and so on, without consent of Parliament; (2) that soldiers should not be billeted in private houses; (3) that there should be no martial law in time of peace; (4) that no one should be imprisoned except on a specified charge. Charles assented to these proposals, and received as a reward five subsidies from Parliament. But he very soon prorogued Parliament, and went on levying royal taxes without the people's consent. Parliament angrily met again to resist the king. The speaker, acting under the king's orders, attempted to choke off debate, but the great Eliot offered his famous resolutions, which were passed while the speaker was held down in the chair. The king instantly dissolved the Parliament. For the eleven following years, from 1629 to 1640, while Milton was at college, reading in the country, and in Italy, Charles was governing without Parliament at all. By the exercise of his prerogative the king was raising money,

making peace and war, introducing distasteful changes in religious discipline, and imprisoning and fining and putting in the pillory men who resisted anything he did. His advisers and helpers were leading him onward in this mistaken course. In particular, Lord Strafford and Archbishop Laud are still remembered for these errors with sorrow and even abhorrence. By a "thorough" policy of repression and enforcement of conformity to the king's will, this party hoped to make the English monarchy just what the Stuart theory of divine right declared it should be, an unlimited despotism. Laud desired to bring the influence of an obedient church, "the handmaid of arbitrary authority," to the support of the Stuart throne. Strafford, going over to Ireland as lord deputy, tried to provide, by a ruthless military *régime*, troops and money to be used in coercing England. To check the rising tide of wrath among his subjects, the advisers of the king developed tribunals, in the name of the "prerogative," to fine, imprison, and pillory such people as they considered dangerous to their policy. The best remembered of these at this day are the "High Commission," a royal commission first created by Elizabeth to help her order ecclesiastical matters, and the "Star Chamber," originally a committee of Council called by the Tudor Kings (and even earlier) to treat of cases not determinable by common law. Then came the invention of "ship-money," and John Hampden's unsuccessful resistance at law. These were dark days for English liberty.

14. Milton came home from Italy just as the Scotch Presbyterian uprising was forcing Strafford and Charles to abandon their policy of "thorough" repression and call Parliament together again. After a year or two of anxious watching, under the excitement of the acts of the Long Parliament, Milton entered public life (as we should say) by publishing, in 1641, several pamphlets on the questions of

the day. This was his first contribution to the Liberal side of the struggle. In days when there was of course no regular newspaper press, these tracts would have the effect in influencing public opinion which is attained in our time by the works of the great editors and writers of political journals. It was one of Milton's occupations to issue such tracts all through the war. He thus played the part in the Rebellion which would now be given to a great journalist in modern politics. He handled chiefly political subjects, but also some subjects not political. For instance, as he was maintaining himself in part by teaching, this interest induced him to write his famous tractate "On Education: to Mr. Samuel Hartlib," in June, 1644. But in all these years (1638–1649) his main interest was in politics and in the war. Except the sonnets written from time to time to commemorate an occasion of public interest, his poetical compositions almost ceased. He began his prose-writing, as we have said, in 1641 by publishing five pamphlets in a current controversy about "Church Government," advocating the abolition of the office of bishop in the Church of England. His next subject was divorce. In the years 1643 and 1644 he printed four pamphlets to show that any marriages ought to be dissolved if husband and wife were not suitable mates for each other. This subject was doubtless brought to his mind by the unlucky experiences of his own sudden marriage in 1643 with Mary Powell, a young girl of seventeen, daughter of a Royalist. But the matter took on a public and political importance. These pamphlets on divorce brought Milton into a quarrel with his political friends of the Presbyterian party. The Westminster Assembly, a body of divines called together by act of the Long Parliament to advise them upon the religious settlement of England, took offence at these very independent doctrines about marriage and tried to have Milton "investigated" by a Parliamentary committee. This act of

theirs separated him forever from the Presbyterian party. It had the effect, moreover, of stimulating him to write in 1644 his greatest pamphlet, "Areopagitica: a Speech of Mr. John Milton for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing: to the Parliament of England." Macaulay speaks on page 84 of this great and beautiful work, which anticipates by more than a hundred years the modern principle of freedom of the press as it was at last introduced and upheld in England and America.

15. It will be seen by one who follows his writing carefully, that as the fight with the king went on, Milton's eager spirit carried him on in the heat of his arguments to separate himself more and more from the moderate supporters of Parliament, consisting chiefly of the Presbyterians and the Scotch party, and to join with the Independents, whose centre was in the army of the military saints commanded by Cromwell. He wrote in their interest, after the execution of the king, his famous pamphlet "On the Tenure of Kings and Magistrates: proving that it is lawfull and hath been held so in all ages for any who have the power to call to account a wicked king or tyrant, and after due conviction to depose and put him to death. The author J. M. 1649." This act identified him finally with the "regicides" and the party of Cromwell. He thought he saw the true principles of liberty there maintained; and here was a refuge for his own imaginative radicalism, which separated him from most parties in the nation. The king had proved, as even his friends ought to admit, an unfit governor of his country in that stormy time. The issues at stake in religion and policy were too difficult for him even to understand. But to Milton and to the Puritans, Charles Stuart was worse than a mistaken partisan; he was the very incarnation of evil. He had made himself guilty of all the innocent blood shed in the war. "The military saints of the army resolved," says Macaulay

in his history, "in defiance of the old laws of the realm, and of the almost universal sentiment of the nation, that the king should expiate his crimes with his blood. A revolutionary tribunal was created; that tribunal pronounced Charles a tyrant, a traitor, a murderer, and a public enemy, and his head was severed from his shoulders before thousands of spectators in front of the banqueting hall of his own palace." So Milton defended this act as a legitimate method of disposing of unsatisfactory "kings and magistrates."

16. After the king's execution the government of England was decreed to be "by way of a republic." The executive administration was nominally intrusted to a Council of State of forty-one members, though the army and Cromwell actually held supreme power. This council in 1649 made John Milton its Secretary for Foreign Tongues. In 1653, when Cromwell dismissed the Rump and founded his Protectorate, according to the "Instrument of Government," a similar council was established, under which Milton held the same office. His duties in these offices were simply to write in his beautiful Latin (the best Latin in Europe of that day) such documents as the government desired to send to foreign powers, and to interpret such documents as came from abroad. In addition to these regular duties, he had a general oversight of any literary work needed by the commonwealth. Such literary tasks were immediately put into his hands. The regicide had to be apologized for and the king's propaganda to be met. The Royalists in 1649 were reading and circulating a book called "Eikon Basiliké" (The King's Image), professing to be a legacy from the dead king, containing the thoughts and prayers of his last hours. Milton was employed to write a book to meet the dangerous popularity of this work. He wrote a tract called "Eikonoclastes: the Image Breaker," criticising and sneering in what one must

say is a rude, brawling tone at the pious sentiments of the king. The Council thought so well of this tract, as to employ Milton again, in 1653, on a similar task. The Royalists, desiring to bring the king's cause before the cultivated and governing classes of Europe, had issued a Latin tract called *Defensio regia*. It was done for them in Holland by a famous Leyden professor, Claude Saumaise, "Salmasius," as he was known to the reading world. Milton answered it by a tract called *Defensio pro populo Anglicano*. This book of Milton's is chiefly interesting as an exhibition of the ferocious personalities which passed for controversy at that time. No cross-roads country editors ever abused each other as these great scholars of European dignity and reputation did. The main question in the *Defensio* about the king is almost lost under a flood of personalities about Salmasius. But the book created a great stir in the highest circles. Milton is said to have received the compliments of every embassy in London on account of the book. "The only inducement," says Aubrey, of this period, "of severall foreigners that came over to England was chiefly to see O. Protector and Mr. J. Milton." But the book has also the sad interest of costing the author his eyesight. Other pamphlets, including a second *Defensio pro populo*, which contains interesting portraits of some great commonwealth statesmen, were dictated and published by him during his secretaryship. There are also still in existence many public letters he wrote for the council and for Cromwell himself. In 1653 Milton's wife died, leaving him the three daughters whose education was so curious and whose attitude to their father so very unfilial. In 1656 he married Catherine Woodcock. She died in 1657, and is buried in St. Margaret's, Westminster. To her he addressed the famous Sonnet XXIII.

17. Another misfortune soon befell him. The death of

Cromwell, in 1658, changed the whole face of English politics, and with this change began the last chapter of Milton's life. After several unlucky experiments it became plain to the English nation that they had now only the choice between the old Stuart monarchy again and government by the major-generals of the Model Army. The army settled the question by beginning to quarrel for the prize, whereupon the civilians of all parties drew together for protection. A "free Parliament," supported by General Monk, brought back the Stuarts in 1660. In a last struggle for his convictions, Milton issued some English pamphlets: some on the old subject of "Church Government" and one, in the very year of the Restoration, called "A Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth and the Excellence Thereof." But the day for these efforts had gone by. The king returned, and the secretary of the commonwealth and the defender of regicide was glad to vanish into poverty and private life. Why Milton was not punished among the other chiefs of the Cromwellian party is still very obscure; but after remaining in hiding for a while he was restored to liberty. His circumstances were much reduced, however, and his circle of friends much diminished. He was a discreditable acquaintance, a "detestable republican," and almost an outlaw. Such people as came about him were chiefly young men of the more devout and persecuted sects. Independent Baptists or Quakers, like young Ellwood, Andrew Marvell, Cyriac Skinner, remained faithful; Lady Ranelagh and others of his older friends and pupils visited him, and a Dr. Paget, a physician of that neighborhood, came to see him often. By Dr. Paget, Milton was recommended to marry as his third wife Elizabeth Minshull, who cherished and cared for him lovingly till his death.

Under these circumstances of comparative isolation and defeat he went back to the other and earlier hopes and

occupations of his life. He began to write poetry again, and between 1662 and 1667, at an age when poetical composition is for most poets over, he wrote "Paradise Lost." The publication of this great poem could not fail to make amends for his disgrace. It won its way slowly but surely, so that in the last years of his life he had many admirers and visitors (among others the court-poet, John Dryden), though he was probably still "more admired abroad than at home." It is of these last years we have the most distinct accounts of his person and occupations. From one of them, the notes of the painter Richardson, Macaulay takes the description of him on page 87. In 1671 Milton published "Paradise Regained," and with it "Samson Agonistes," the poem which has a special interest for Milton's admirers, who trace in it a delicate reminiscence of great dramatic scenes in his own life. These were his last poetic works. He died in 1674, at the age of sixty-six, and was buried in St. Giles's, Cripplegate, near the chancel, after a long life nearly coextensive with that of the Stuart monarchy which he tried to overthrow.

18. It is interesting to notice that in these last years of his life, when his friends were chiefly younger men and his active political life ceased, that Milton's thoughts went back to his early avocation as a school-teacher. He published at this time, from old manuscript material, a Latin grammar and a logic, and he left behind him some collections for a history and for a Latin lexicon. Among other such things he was preparing in his last days a book for the instruction of students, to contain a summary of theology. Apparently the title he meant to give it was "*Idea Theologiæ.*" It was to follow the scheme of the manuals in which he used to study divinity in college, at least in the division of subjects and the titles of chapters. But the sole authority for its conclusions was to be directly derived from texts of the Bible quoted in ap-

propriate places. This book was left in the hands of one of his young friends, Mr. Daniel Skinner, unfinished. It is a book of curious interest, a sort of summary of the theology of "Paradise Lost" with every particle of poetry evaporated, like the juice out of a dried apple, and yet with poetic suggestion about passages in it. It is this book which Macaulay nominally reviews in the present essay.

19. A few more remarks about the course of Stuart politics after Milton's death will perhaps help the reader in following the latter paragraphs of the essay. The Restoration days were not altogether easy times. England had taken up her Stuart monarchy in 1660, as a refuge from the worse trouble of anarchy, as a man returns, for necessary protection against bad weather, to an old garment once discarded. It did not protect her very well. There were, to be sure, no more sufferings from ostentatious tyranny on the part of King Charles, no rebellious Parliaments in arms against royal authority; but for fifty years more there were continual movements of political parties for the overthrow of government. Protestants suspected Catholics, and passed severe penal laws against that religion. Tories suspected Whigs and procured severe laws against Protestant Dissenters. The side which got uppermost in politics condemned and executed its opponents. Such a disturbance was the Papist Plot in 1678, whose story was probably a figment composed by a band of needy adventurers who made their living as witnesses. For some reason the government pretended to believe them, and many wholly innocent Catholics lost their lives as plotters against the king. In 1680 a bill to exclude James, the king's brother, from the throne because he had become a Catholic, passed the House of Commons. The king dissolved the Parliament and summoned a new one at Oxford, hoping that the memories of the civil war and the loyalty of that old university might affect the disposition

of the members. The conduct of this Parliament, called the "Oxford Parliament," however, was so stubborn and insolent as to create a reaction in the country in favor of the king. Charles dissolved this Parliament after a session of only a few days, and the reaction continued. By 1683 the Tories had won the public confidence again. Some secret party schemes of certain great Whig nobles were discovered by the Tories, and at the same time there came out a plot cooked up by some villainous hangers-on of the Whig party to assassinate the king and his brother near the "Rye-house," a farm on the way from London to Newmarket. By a malicious confusion of the two "plots," Lord Russell and Algernon Sidney were found guilty of treason and executed. But the death of Charles in 1685 brought his Catholic brother to the throne of England. The Roman danger from which English Protestantism had been safe since the execution of Mary Queen of Scots reappeared in startling form. All other issues were swallowed up in this. In three years James had so alarmed all parties by his tyrannical acts in connection with his efforts to re-establish the Catholic religion, that people of all parties joined in inviting the Prince of Orange to enter England with Dutch troops. Thus came about the revolution of 1688, of which Macaulay says so much. Parliament laid before the Prince of Orange, who was a near heir to the crown himself, and whose wife was next heir after James and his children, a "Declaration of Right." It contains once more an assertion of the principles for which the people of England had been fighting through the lifetime of Milton. Making or suspending laws without consent of Parliament is to cease; ecclesiastical commissions are not to be made into courts; levying money without consent of Parliament is illegal; elections of members of Parliament must be free; and so on. William and Mary accepted the crown then offered them, and were proclaimed king and

queen on condition that they should abide by these principles. Henceforth the Stuart theory of divine right could never be pleaded by any English monarch again. James Stuart and his son, with the adhesion of a smaller number of Englishmen in each generation, represented themselves as kings of England by inheritance till the direct line died out. But the actual monarchs of England have held their authority ever since 1688, not by the law of inheritance, but by the consent of the people. The Stuart theory of divine right was dead.

20. But under the new "constitutional monarchy" the struggle still went on. There still continued to be two parties in politics, the party of progress and reform, inheriting most of the Puritan tradition in church and state, and the party representing the English love of precedent, custom, and conventionality. They called themselves Whig and Tory, cant terms of uncertain origin and no meaning. Addison, like Milton, and, indeed, like Macaulay also in his day, belonged to the party of popular government, the Whigs.

21. In the confusing history of England in Addison's lifetime, this significant fact may be seized and remembered in connection with his career. Almost unconsciously, in the intrigues of the court and the politicians, the great English device of "party-government" was developing—a happy device, avoiding evermore the civil wars and blind revolutions of Milton's day, yet providing freedom for the advance of the English nation toward the democratic ideals of the inevitable future.

22. Under "party-government" in its modern shape, the sovereign selects to conduct the affairs of the nation a committee of councillors, called the Cabinet, giving to each member charge of some important department of the executive work of government. By selecting all this Cabinet from one party, and making it represent the majority

in Parliament, the actual governing body of England, the English "Government" is made to obey the will of the people. The clumsy and cruel decisions of physical force and civil war need not be resorted to in determining the most exciting questions of domestic and foreign policy.

23. When Queen Anne came to the throne in 1702 it cannot be said that this method of government had been properly developed, at least as a regular part of British constitutional procedure. But the activity of parties in her reign brought it forward very far. The Queen found herself faced at her accession by two parties; and she had ties with each. The Tories, on the whole, represented the principles of her family and her own convictions; but the Act of Settlement which made her Queen was a Whig measure. Her friends the Churchills, like herself, were Tories by education. Marlborough, Anne's most trusted adviser, and in fact the whole body of her councillors, were, however, by the influence of the war which England had to fight with Louis XIV., swept over toward a Whig policy and driven to a Whig support. The reason of this war and of England's connection with it was as follows. After the Revolution of 1688, which banished James II., England found herself curiously entangled with the politics of the continent. William III., her reigning sovereign, was a Dutchman, with Dutch relationships. The banished Stuarts took refuge at the court of Louis XIV., the great historic representative of absolute monarchy (*l'état, c'est moi*), and enlisted the active aid of France in restoring them to the English throne. The next heirs to the Stuarts were the German princes of Hanover. It is no wonder that the English politics of Addison's lifetime dealt largely with foreign alliances and foreign dynastic questions. The great question of all was, briefly put, how far in general the power of Louis XIV. (*le roi soleil*) was to extend over Europe, and whether England and the other

powers were to become subservient to his interests. Naturally Louis represented everything that was hostile to England's future growth and her present cherished convictions and hopes. He was the great Roman Catholic prince, heading the Anti-Protestant party in Europe. He was an absolute monarch, like the Stuarts she had just turned out, the support and example of all the princely tyrants of his day and long after. Moreover, he was a dangerous monarch. He had created a military despotism of almost irresistible power. He was served by the best soldiers and the most cunning diplomats of his time. Even the genuine glory of his reign, the graceful culture, that æsthetic superiority of French society which extended French ideals irresistibly over the life and literature of all Europe, became too tyrannical in the end to be wholesome. To make head against all this tyranny, then, merely to save the life of the other races of Europe, vigorous resistance was demanded. The world needed an alliance of all who represented any human hope not included in the conceptions of life in vogue at the French court. When, therefore, on the decay of the Spanish reigning house, Louis seemed likely to get control of the resources of Spain, all Europe, with England at the head, rose against him. This was the meaning of Queen Anne's French war, which Marlborough was waging as Captain-General of the English forces, in alliance with the Dutch, Prince Eugene, the House of Savoy, and the Imperial German houses; this gave the great value to Marlborough's victories of Blenheim, Ramillies, and Oudenarde. This made it impossible even for the Jacobites and Tories of England to avoid seeking support from the Whig party against France, even though France supported the Pretender to the English throne. But the results of this confusion of purposes in the court and cabinet of Queen Anne produced a series of vacillations and cross-currents in her own policy. The changes of ministry in

her reign, though not regular, may be summarized as follows: (*a*) *From 1702–1708* (*drift toward the Whigs*). She leaned at her accession first to the Tory party, making the Tory leaders, Harley and Godolphin, her chief ministers and refusing to appoint Whigs. But the war and the influence of Marlborough, the Captain-General, working largely through the curious submissive friendship of the Queen for the Duchess of Marlborough, drove them all slowly over to the Whig party. As the victories of Blenheim and Ramillies made England glorious, and the Whigs powerful, the Queen dismissed her Tories and appointed Whigs. She did it with reluctance. Of the "Junto," as the Whig leaders were called (Somers, Halifax, Oxford, Wharton, and Sunderland), she hated the last two personally, as much as she liked Harley. But she put Somers, Cowper, and even Sunderland and Wharton into power, and dismissed Harley. This movement brought Addison into office, first under Godolphin, and then under Wharton. Godolphin and Marlborough identified themselves with the Whigs, scandalizing the high Tories, but escaping dismissal. (*b*) *From 1708–1710* (*the Whigs in power; Tory reaction*). The Queen's policy drifted back to the Tory side. She transferred her personal affections to Mrs. Masham, a cousin of Harley, who represented the Tory intrigue. The feelings of her subjects also turned against the costly war and the statesmen who carried it on. Then, in an unlucky moment, Godolphin undertook to prosecute a clergyman, Dr. Sacheverell, for preaching a sermon against the war and the ministers. The prosecution failed; and the Queen, who was a high-church woman, supported by the general feeling of the nation, treated the injured divine as a martyr. She dismissed Godolphin and one after another of the Whigs. In 1710 a new election gave a Tory majority in Parliament, and Harley came back to power as Lord Treasurer. (*c*) *From 1710–1714* (*the Tories in power*). Then the fear of a

Stuart restoration restored the Whigs. Once more, when George I. was made King, the Whig party became again all powerful, holding office steadily till the accession of George III., and representing the Protestant principles and the Hanoverian succession.

24. Addison's fortunes carried him deep into these party-politics of the reign of Anne. Like Milton, in the altered conditions of this new world, he played, in a sense, the useful part of modern editors in great contests of national politics. The needs of the Whig cause, bound "to own no force but argument," required, as Macaulay shows, the help of clever pens; and the Whig leaders were lucky to find one in Addison. It is an interesting story to read, and Macaulay tells it well,—how the young Fellow of Magdalen, by the extremely characteristic eighteenth century method of writing Latin verse, first came to the notice of the University men, who then as now were forward in the councils of the English state and church; how he became under their patronage at first a writer of what might be called "Government poetry" for the Whigs; and then, with his friend Steele, discovered and mastered the great new form of literature, the periodical magazine, producing the immortal *Tatler* and *Spectator*, and their less known competitors. Not even Roman satire is more characteristic of its national origin than these essays. The papers of the *Tatler* are living pictures of the Englishmen who invented them. Even when they do not contain political "leading-articles" in the strict sense, they are filled with the soul of the English Whigs of Queen Anne's reign. Human life in them is a practical problem, like the problems of politics. To live it well society must argue and debate its questions, decide them for good and sufficient reasons, and abide by the decision. But under this fundamental notion of an argumentative criticism of life in calm and unimpassioned debate, the essayist continually introduces, in the guise of

evidence and testimony upon questions at issue, vivid pictures of contemporary life based upon his observation of human nature. His propositions and the testimony to them are carefully stated in clear and graceful English prose; the air of a quiet speaker to an intelligent assembly is maintained; though it is but a dull hearer who cannot recognize, in spite of some characteristic conventionalities of form, an expression of some of the deepest and tenderest experiences of the English nature. Even if we cannot now take these writings at their best value, at least we still can trace in them the undoubted origin of such forms of literature as at present do mean the most to all of us. The *Tatler* essays are the true ancestors of the modern novel, the modern magazine, and the modern newspaper. Everything that has been accomplished by English literature in these three great departments was lying in the path that Steele and Addison "blazed out" at the beginning of the eighteenth century with their pioneer periodicals, which they intended to be mirrors of contemporary life and thought.

25. Among the statesmen who, fortunately for English literature, discovered Addison, the most interesting person was his first patron, Charles Montague, also known in the essay as Halifax, from his title. Montague began, like Addison, as a scholar and a writer of Latin verse. He was intended, like Addison, to be a clergyman. But he left literature and divinity and entered Parliament. There he became one of the Whig leaders and helped not a little to bring about the Revolution of 1689. He displayed a wonderful ability as Lord Treasurer of King William, and will always be remembered, not for discovering Addison, the founder of modern English prose, but for initiating the three characteristic features of modern English finance—the Bank of England, the national debt, and the sterling and stable currency. His interesting life may be read in Macaulay's "History of England."

26. Another of Addison's early patrons was Lord Chancellor Somers,[1] to whom he dedicated his "Travels in Italy," the great lawyer, worker, and Whig politician, famous as John Locke's patron, not less than for the help he gave Addison. Another patron of later date was Lord Cowper, first Lord Chancellor of Great Britain. He is famous not only as a great Whig lawyer, but for actions transcending partisanship, such as his opposing Marlborough's desire to be made captain-general for life. In fact, Addison's path in life brought him in contact with the foremost Englishmen of his time.[2] Another public man of great interest is Sidney Godolphin, the Lord Treasurer of Anne, who gave Addison the commission to write the "Campaign." He was the faithful servant said by Charles II. to be "never in the way and never out of the way," afterwards minister of James II. and favorite counsellor of Anne, who though a Tory in feeling, knew how to co-operate with the Whigs, as the "October Club" did not. Until Sacheverell attacked him he was ever the judicious adviser and calm counsellor of the Cabinet. Through his fatal impeachment of that divine, he ruined his own life and the Whig cause. Nor should the student of Addison forget Harley, Earl of Oxford. Though head of the Tory party in Anne's reign, he rose from the humblest beginnings through a history far more characteristic of the Whig politician, by tact, brains, and debating-power, to be one of the greatest nobles of England and the favored minister of Queen Anne. His immense aptitude for the business of government, his indifference to principle, and talent for intrigue, made him, within the limits of his situation,

[1] For his connection with important events in King William's reign, see Macaulay's *History of England.*

[2] It will be well for the student to look up, for example, in the index to Macaulay's *History*, the names of Sunderland, Shrewsbury, Cowper, and Wharton.

the most successful contemporary politician. Perhaps the most brilliant of all that are mentioned in this essay, however, was Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, whose many interests can only be alluded to here.[1] Last but not least, there is to be studied with respect the great Marlborough, and his equally great wife, Sarah Jennings. It is true that Addison's contact with them is but slight. Yet the hero of the "Campaign" and the maker of history in this reign is not to be ignored, though his biography cannot be properly discussed at the end of a paragraph. Students should consult Mrs. Creighton's "Life of Marlborough," that of Lord Wolseley, or that of Mr. Saintsbury.

27. It will hardly be necessary for any one who has read Macaulay's essay to look elsewhere for biographical material of Addison. Macaulay has traced with much particularity the course of his life, following Miss Aikin's exhaustive work in its details. If one wishes more, Courthope's "Addison," in the English Men of Letters Series, serves to bring out in a more careful perspective view some facts about Addison which Macaulay distorts in the fervor of his eloquent descriptions.

28. Of late years there has been a great deal of historical work about Addison's contemporaries, as there has been a sort of revival in interest for the habits and customs of our ancestors of Queen Anne's day. Old silver, old furniture, old architecture charm our present caprice and, under the modern historic taste, such books as Ashton's "Social Life of Queen Anne," Sydney's "England in the Eighteenth Century," and Morris's "Age of Anne" in the Epochs of History Series, have made easy of acquisition much of the

[1] The student who wishes to know more of these great men may look in Lord Stanhope's *Reign of Queen Anne*, and Lord Mahon's *History of England*. See also the opening chapters of Morley's *Walpole*. Good articles upon them will also be found in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

close information about the period which Macaulay says it is desirable to have in studying Addison.

29. Two or three matters of interest may here be recommended to general students. No one can get the full flavor of the social life of the time who does not study the London coffee-houses, taverns, and clubs. The coffee-houses were much like modern clubs. In each were found every day its own characteristic set of frequenters, sipping coffee or "mineral-water," writing letters, reading the "news-sheets," transacting business, or playing cards. It is said that in 1715 there were as many as two thousand coffee-houses in London. Each had its own clients. Literary men went to "Will's" or "Buttons" or the "Grecian," merchants to "Jonathan's," Whigs to the "St. James," Tories to the "Cocoa-Tree."[1] There were also clubs of a more definite organization. The "October Club" is thus described by Swift: "We are plagued here with an October Club, a set of above a hundred parliament men of the country, who drink October beer, and meet every evening at a tavern near the Parliament to consult affairs, and to drive things on to extremes against the Whigs, to call the old ministry to account and get off five or six heads." The rival Whig club was the "Kit-Cat." It contained a galaxy of wits and statesmen. "Peg Woffington," the actress, was at one time its president. Halifax, Somers, Addison, Congreve, Vanbrugh, the Dukes of Somerset, Devonshire, Marlborough, Newcastle, the Earls of Dorset, Sutherland, Sir Robert Walpole, and many other great people were members.[2]

30. Interesting subjects would be found in the investigation of the education of youth in those days; the posi-

[1] See the first numbers of the *Tatler* for a list of fashionable coffee-houses.

[2] For a full account of these things see Sydney's *England*, Vol. I., Chapter IV.

tion, social and civic, of scholars and literary men; the life at the Universities; the character of the scholarship and the thought of the country; as well as the history of the bookmaking and bookselling of the period. Some of these questions connect themselves with Addison's own history. At school, under the discipline of the rod, he learned the current classical lore, of which Latin was more attentively studied than Greek, and the forms of Latin far more than the contents. The culmination of such an education was to get ability in Latin verse composition. Few reached anything noteworthy in such an artificial accomplishment, though every boy pursued it. Hence Addison's gift was valued and admired by a wide public, and hence the great and admirable talents of Bentley, who is now seen to be the only scholar of any profitable type in a whole generation of English classicists, were only half understood and greatly undervalued by contemporary English scholars, because he dealt scientifically with the classics, with matter as well as form, and with the original Greek rather than the devious traditions of Italy and Rome. Addison's "grand tour" after leaving Magdalen, again indicates the type of the regular genteel English education, though Addison was of course a man who made something of it, just as he did of his Latin verse, where others did not.

31. The good luck of the authors born at this period would be another subject of interest. The literary world in the "Augustan Age" of Queen Anne was in the height of fashion. Places and appointments were showered on successful writers; ministries rivalled each other in recognizing talent; authors lived with noblemen, and noblemen affected to be authors. The men who wrote the *Tatler* and *Spectator* had the same lives, the same ambitions, and the same hopes, successes, and failures as the social leaders and statesmen of the aristocracy. The cause of this phenome-

non has been described by Macaulay in pp. 145–148; it is all the more odd because there is no evidence that Queen Anne herself was fond of literature or art. For any parallel to the social conditions of authorship under Anne we must come down to the reign of Victoria; and it may well be doubted if even here the social valuation placed upon wit and talent has ever been relatively so high as in Anne's reign. In the reign of the Georges all this good fortune was changed; the horrors of Grub Street set in, as exhibited in the life of Samuel Johnson, who was born before Addison died, and who starved and grew prematurely old in the same profession as Addison's, within the very next generation of Englishmen.

32. One should refer to larger works than this for treatment of these interesting topics. Among the most valuable will be the classic novel of Thackeray, "Henry Esmond." Thackeray depicts as few historical novelists have ever done the vanished life that Macaulay is here studying. It is a marvellous reproduction of the distant scene of Anne's reign; the dead figures move again, in habit as they lived, following the course of events with historic accuracy, while yet the story marches on with the freedom and vivacity of untrammelled imaginative fiction. Thackeray may not be always trustworthy. Possibly Steele is drawn of too light a character, as he is also in Macaulay's essay; very likely the love-story is a little out of keeping, and Henry Esmond himself rather an anachronism. But it remains a remarkable work of art and one of the best places in the world to study the age of Addison.[1]

33. The character of Addison himself, his prudence, modesty, good temper, and social charm, is on the whole well described by Macaulay. Its distinctive traits are brought out very clearly, as they appeared in his writings,

[1] See also *Historical Characters of the Reign of Queen Anne*, by Mrs. Oliphant.

and in the evidence of his contemporaries. Thackeray has drawn the same Addison, with some exaggerations of traits, in the "English Humorists" and in "Henry Esmond." There is a very good biographical article upon Addison by Leslie Stephen in the "Dictionary of National Biography," and another by William Spalding, in the "Encyclopædia Britannica." Courthope's "Addison," in the English Men of Letters Series, has already been mentioned. Out of any of these a clear picture of that fair character may without trouble be derived by the student.

34. There is in the "Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot," as is well-known, a famous characterization of Addison at the hand of Pope, which ought to be compared with these, and which, though preserving the same general picture, gives a different kind of meaning to the character. For convenience of reference it is here printed.

"Peace to all such! but were there one whose fires
True Genius kindles and fair Fame inspires;
Blest with each talent and each art to please,
And born to write, converse, and live with ease:
Should such a man, too fond to rule alone,
Bear, like the Turk, no brother near the throne.
View him with scornful, yet with jealous eyes,
And hate for arts that caused himself to rise;
Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
And without sneering, teach the rest to sneer;
Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,
Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike;
Alike reserved to blame, or to command,
A tim'rous foe, and a suspicious friend;
Dreading ev'n fools, by flatterers besieg'd,
And so obliging, that he ne'er oblig'd:
Like Cato, give his little senate laws,
And sit attentive to his own applause;
While Wits and Templars every sentence raise,
And wonder with a foolish face of praise:—
Who but must laugh, if such a man there be?
Who would not weep, if Atticus were he?"

35. The "little senate" referred to here contains two names worth a mention. Eustace Budgell, Addison's mother's sister's son, was a lawyer, or "Templar," who lived a great deal under Addison's care, and was a sort of private secretary to him, when in office. He is credited with some good papers in the *Spectator*. He separated from Addison before the latter's death, and the later years of his life were clouded with melancholy, ending in suicide at the age of fifty-seven. The other is Thomas Tickell, a mediocre poet, whose success in life was mainly due to the friendship and patronage of Addison. He is to be remembered for three things: first, that his attempt to translate the "Iliad" into English embroiled Addison (most unjustly) with Pope; second, that Addison's kindness in getting Tickell the under-secretaryship of state in 1717 chagrined Steele, and began the coolness between him and his old friend; third, that Tickell's eulogy on Addison is a remarkable instance of how strong feelings produce good poetry from a man not otherwise inspired. Addison made Tickell his literary executor, and he published the first edition of Addison's works.

36. The quarrel with Pope and the quarrel with Steele, such as it was, need not be treated at greater length than is done in the essay. Pope should be further studied for his own sake, however. Perhaps the best plan would be to read Lowell's essay on Pope, or Leslie Stephen's memoir of Pope in the English Men of Letters Series. For the character of Steele's life and work one should certainly not trust to Macaulay. Books to consult are "Selections from the Works of Steele," by G. R. Carpenter; "Steele," by Austin Dobson; "Life of Steele," by G. A. Aitken. Lastly, the great Dean Swift comes into close relations with Addison. Swift's "Journal to Stella" gives an idea of their friendship and its gradual cooling. For the study of Swift, see "Swift," by Leslie Stephen, and Craik's "Life

of Swift." It is certainly interesting that these three, the greatest minds in Addison's circle of friends, did not maintain their intimacy.

37. It is not part of the editor's intention to add to the student's task the close study of the age of Macaulay. But it would be ungrateful to Lord Macaulay not to wish to know anything more of his life than the reading of this essay involves. Trevelyan's biography, at least in selections, will be at once a sufficient reference for this purpose, and is for its own sake, as almost a classic biography already, to be suggested to the young student of English literature. Macaulay went on writing for the *Edinburgh Review* a succession of brilliant papers. These were collected and published in 1843, rather against his wishes. He thought them of temporary interest only, and scarcely worthy of preservation in book form. They have, however, remained ever since among the most popular books in the English language. About six thousand copies a year of them in various editions are sold in his native country alone, and the demand for them is so steady as to be, like the demand for herrings in Holland, a sort of index from year to year of the country's prosperity. In 1830 Macaulay entered Parliament, being helped to get a seat there by Lord Lansdowne, who did not know him, but was interested in him by reading his essay on Mill. The most famous of these essays on literary subjects are those on Addison, Milton, Bunyan, and Johnson. On historical subjects the best essays are on Hallam, Temple (thought the best of all by Morison), Pitt, Clive, and Warren Hastings. There are famous passages also in the essay on Ranke's "History of the Popes," and in that on Bacon.

38. Macaulay remained in Parliament through the great contest for reform in Parliament in 1832. His speeches made about that time on the passage of the great Reform Bill are very famous. In 1834 he received an honorable

and lucrative appointment in India. He here lived till 1838, doing excellent work for the government, and for himself reading enormously in the Greek and Latin classics, as was the habit of his life. He then returned to England in 1839 and re-entered political life as member of Parliament for Edinburgh. He continued to write at intervals, bringing out, among the other things which every school-boy knows, the "Lays of Ancient Rome," in 1842. He now began also in the intervals of political life to write his great "History of England." The first volumes of this appeared in 1848, followed by two more in 1855. This work may be called the most popular book of the sort ever printed in English. The publishers were able, in March of 1856, to pay him in one single check £20,000, for his share of the profits of one English edition. The number of editions of this great book is now quite beyond computation; and its sale still often exceeds that of the most popular novel of a year. It made him one of the most famous historians in Europe. But the plan of the work was so great that even with all his wonderful industry it was never finished. It remains, like a broken statue, just as the author left it at his death, not half completed according to his design.

39. Macaulay's political life was full of prosperity, checkered with less adversity than falls to the lot of most politicians. He lost his seat at Edinburgh, but was afterwards triumphantly re-elected. In 1839 he was a member of Lord Melbourne's government. In 1857 he was made Baron Macaulay of Rothley Temple. But the larger part of his interest lay always with his literary and historical work, upon which he labored, till, in 1859, he died, not unprepared by gradually failing health for that event, though it came to him at the early age of fifty-nine. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, in the Poets' Corner near the statue of Addison. His "Life and Letters," re-

ferred to above, has been published by his nephew, Sir George Trevelyan. It is one of the best biographies ever written, and is again much to be commended to the general reader who desires to know more of a noble man.

40. As to Macaulay's "position in literature," the question may be said to be still undetermined. We wait for a thorough analysis of his work by the critics, and the critics wait for the final judgment of posterity. During his life he was esteemed even beyond measure by his countrymen. After his death came a sort of reaction against this popularity. The tide, however, seems to be setting again the other way. At any rate, no one has ever denied that his narrative power in history is unapproached. And, as Mr. Saintsbury says in his latest criticism of Macaulay, he is certainly a very great man of letters, and "an unsurpassed leader to reading."

SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

I. THE first purpose in the mind of both teachers and students must be to use the two essays of Macaulay, as the author intended them to be used, not so much as objects of study in themselves as a help toward the study of the authors to whom they are dedicated. Of course they should be read carefully and intelligently, with due attention to the significance of the wealth of allusions by which Macaulay often conveys points in his discussions—points not to be understood by one who is ignorant of the general facts alluded to. The important thing, however, is that the pupil should learn, through Macaulay, to know Milton and Addison, and should keep this purpose uppermost in his mind in all his study of them.

II. This object will be served by asking the students to make outline sketches of the contents of each essay and of the several topics handled in each section of each essay. Written summaries may be composed in the class extempore, or given from memory after preparation. Students may also be asked to study the Introduction in the same way. The Introduction, which is meant to be read as a whole, apart from the work upon the essays, is supposed to put the student in an attitude of general intelligence toward the essays themselves and the subjects treated, as well as this can be managed without much reading in many books. It may not be necessary for the pupils to read the whole Introduction very carefully; the good teacher will gather from it him-

self the objects held in view by the editor, and can help his pupils to reach them in any better way which occurs to him. Much reading in many books, when time permits, is of course a better way, if a pupil means to succeed in getting hold of the whole matter in the best way possible, regardless of time spent. Let a pupil read Milton's life, in Johnson's "Lives of the Poets," and he will not need to be told in the introduction what Macaulay is thinking of in his paragraphs about Johnson in the "Essay on Milton." Let him read "The Period of Reform," by Justin McCarthy, and he will not need to be told why Macaulay, in 1825, fights so hard for the Puritans of 1650. But the editor does not feel that, as things are in the schools, such reading, or the time for such reading, can be assumed to belong to "every school-boy." The actual alternative for the actual school-boy must often be to get such ideas from his text-book as will make it possible to read Macaulay understandingly, or not to get them at all. The editor has, therefore, more courage to ask for the reading of the long Introduction, even if it be only as a guide to work much better done by teacher and pupil together in their own way and at their own time.

III. Tests and thorough examinations on the work upon these essays should be given frequently, in connection with the school reading of the books of Milton and Addison which are prescribed. These tests should imply familiarity with these essays of Macaulay's, and with the general situations treated therein. They should also imply reading about Milton's life and political activity—for example, about the Stuart Kings, especially Charles I., the career of Cromwell, the Puritan Revolution, the reigns of Charles II. and James II., the Revolution of 1689, something about Louis XIV. and the France of the seventeenth century, William III. and Anne, Marlborough and the Wars of the Spanish Succession, and the struggle of Whigs and Tories down

to the accession of George I. They will imply also that the student shall have derived an unconscious participation in Macaulay's own attitude about this history, and should have begun to criticise in Macaulay's fashion, with Macaulay's help, not only the people and the subjects here treated, but other kindred topics, particularly perhaps Macaulay himself. All this, it is supposed, will be produced by studying these two essays in these subjects, with the help of the notes, the Introduction, and the parallel readings recommended.

IV. As to rhetorical study of the essays and criticism of Macaulay, tempting as it is, it ought to be subordinated to the historical work described above. The teacher must be guided by his respect for the immaturity of his scholars, the shortness of the time at his command, the relations of the parts of school work to each other. Younger pupils must doubtless be drilled in the vocabulary of Macaulay. Older pupils may discuss to advantage certain rhetorical subjects, using Macaulay as a provision of materials and examples. For example, these essays illustrate beautifully the periodic and the loose sentence, climaxes, re-statement of one idea in several forms, studied variety in wording, illustration and proof, parallel construction, "particularity," figures of speech, similes and metaphors, antithesis, pungent contrasts, balanced expression, epigram and paradox, Biblical phraseology and cadence, alternation of long and short sentences, artistic inversion and interrogation. The teacher and, better still, the pupil, will find his own examples. Any standard text-book in rhetoric will serve as a guide.

V. Students should have access to a library containing the necessary reference books. For the study of these essays the following may be suggested as valuable:

(*1*) *General Reference Books:* A good encyclopædia; "The Century Dictionary," especially the supplementary

volume on Names and Places; Stopford Brooke's "Primer of English Literature;" Ward's "English Poets;" Tillinghast's Ploetz's "Epitome of History," and a good atlas.

(*2*) *General Historical Works:* J. R. Green's "History of the English People;" Gardiner's "Student's History;" "Selections from Clarendon" (Boyle); Carlyle's "Cromwell;" Masson's "Life of Milton;" Stanhope's "History of Queen Anne's Reign;" Lecky's "England in the Eighteenth Century;" and, as manuals, Gardiner's "Puritan Revolution;" Hale's "Fall of the Stuarts;" Morris's "Age of Anne" (in the Epochs of History), and "Student's Church History," Second Period.

(*3*) *Milton:* Poetical Works, edited by Masson (3 vols.) (or any other good edition); Prose Works; Bohn's Standard Library (5 vols.), or "Selections," by Henry Morley, in the Carisbrooke Library. For biography and criticism, see Pattison's "Milton;" Arnold's "A French Critic on Milton;" Lowell's "Milton," in "Among my Books;" and the life of Milton in Johnson's "Lives of the Poets."

(*4*) *Addison:* Collected works, edited by Bishop Hurd, Bohn's Standard Library; "Selections from the Spectator" (Clarendon Press), "Spectator in London," illustrated (Seeley & Co.); "Essays of Joseph Addison," chosen and edited by J. R. Green. For biography and criticism, see W. S. Courthope's "Addison;" Thackeray's "Henry Esmond" and "English Humorists," and the life of Addison in Johnson's "Lives of the Poets." A full set of the *Tatler, Spectator,* and *Guardian* would be valuable. Dobson's "Eighteenth Century Essays" contains selections from many contemporary periodicals.

(*5*) *Macaulay:* "Essays;" "History of England;" "Poems" (Longmans, Green, & Co.). For biography and criticism, see Trevelyan's "Macaulay's Life and Letters;" Morison's "Macaulay;" Morley's "Essay on Macaulay," in his Collected Works; Bagehot's "Essay on Macaulay,"

in his "Miscellanies," Vol. I.; Leslie Stephen's "Macaulay," in his "Hours in a Library" (Third Series); and for later views, "Macaulay's Place in English Literature," by Frederic Harrison, and "Macaulay," by George Saintsbury, in his "Corrected Impressions." For the history of Macaulay's time see the "Period of Reform," by Justin McCarthy, in the Epochs of History Series.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

I. Milton's Life: 1608-1674. Period of Puritan Revolution.

Contemporary Political History.	History of Literature and Science.
1603. James I. succeeded.	
1607. Virginia settled.	
1610. Louis XIII. of France succeeded.	1610. Galileo's telescope.
	1611. English Bible.
	1619. Harvey discovered circulation of blood.
1620. Plymouth settled.	1620. Bacon's Novum Organum.
1621. Philip IV. of Spain succeeded.	1631. Herbert's Temple.
1625. Charles I. succeeded.	1633. L'Allegro and Il Penseroso.
1628. "Petition of Right."	1634. Comus (acted).
1630. Boston settled.	1638. Lycidas.
1640. Long Parliament met.	1640-60. Milton's prose writings, most of the Sonnets.
1642-46. Civil War.	
1643. Louis XIV. of France succeeded.	
1643-49. Westminster Assembly.	
1645. New Model Army.	
1648. Peace of Westphalia.	
1649. Execution of Charles I.	
1653-59. Commonwealth.	1651. Hobbes's Leviathan.
1660. Restoration of Stuarts; Charles II. succeeded.	1660. Royal Society founded.
1665. Plague.	
1666. Fire of London.	1666. Law of Gravitation discovered by Isaac Newton.
1668. Triple Alliance (England, Holland, and Sweden against France).	1667. Paradise Lost.
	1670. Walton's Lives.
	1671. Samson Agonistes; Paradise Regained.

II. Addison's Life: 1672-1719. Period of Whig Revolution and Age of Anne.

Contemporary Political History.	History of Literature and Science.
1678. Peace of Nimuegen; Popish Club of Dr. Oates.	1678. Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress.
1679. Exclusion Bill; Whig and Tory parties began.	1681. Dryden's Absalom and Ahitophel.
1683. Ryehouse Plot.	
1685. James II. succeeded; Sedgemoor; Bloody Assizes.	

ADDISON'S LIFE—*Continued.*

CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL HISTORY.	HISTORY OF LITERATURE AND SCIENCE.
1687. Expulsion of Fellows of Magdalen.	1687. Hind and Panther; Montague and Prior's burlesque; Country Mouse and City Mouse; Newton's Principia.
1688. Declaration of Indulgence; Trial of seven Bishops; Landing of William of Orange.	
1689. William III. and Mary succeeded; the "Glorious Revolution"; Grand Alliance against France.	
1690. Battle of the Boyne.	1690. Locke on Human Understanding.
1694. Bank of England began.	
1697. Peace of Ryswick.	1697. Bentley's Epistles of Phalaris; Congreve's Mourning Bride; Dryden's Virgil.
1700. Philip Duke of Anjou and Charles of Austria disputed the Spanish crown; War of Spanish Succession (1701–1714).	1700. Dryden's Fables.
1701. "Act of Settlement."	1701. Steele's Christian Hero; Defoe's True Born Englishman.
1702. Anne succeeded; Ministry of Godolphin.	
1704. Tory ministers added; Blenheim.	1704. Campaign; Swift's Battle of Books and Tale of a Tub.
1706. Ramillies.	1706. Defoe's Apparition of Mrs. Veal.
1708. Dismissal of Tories; Whigs powerful.	1709. Pope's Pastorals; The Tatler.
1710. Prosecution of Sacheverell; Tory reaction; Whigs dismissed.	1711. Pope's Essay on Criticism; The Spectator.
1713. Peace of Utrecht.	1712. Rape of the Lock.
1714. George I. succeeded; Whigs returned to office.	1713. Cato.
1715. Louis XV. of France succeeded; Jacobite rebellion in Scotland.	1714. Steele's The Crisis.
	1715. Pope's Iliad.
	1719. Robinson Crusoe; Watts's Psalms and Hymns.

ESSAY ON MILTON

(*Edinburgh Review*, August, 1825.)

Joannis Miltoni, Angli, de Doctrina Christiana libri duo posthumi.[1] *A Treatise on Christian Doctrine,* compiled from the Holy Scriptures alone. By JOHN MILTON, translated from the original by Charles R. Sumner, M.A., etc., etc. 1825.[2]

1. TOWARDS the close of the year 1823, Mr. Lemon,[3] deputy keeper of the state papers, in the course of his researches among the presses[4] of his office, met with a large Latin manuscript. With it were found corrected copies of the foreign despatches written by Milton while he filled the

§§ 1–8. PREFATORY REMARKS. *Description of a theological work by John Milton, lately discovered.*

[1] Literally, Two Posthumous Books of John Milton, Englishman, on Christian Doctrine. Milton's title originally intended for it was probably *Idea Theologiæ* or "A Body of Divinity."

[2] Published in two editions. Latin and English, by Dr. Sumner. Both are now rare books The English version, re-edited by J. A. St. John, is to be found in Bohn's Standard Library, *Milton's Prose Works,* Vols. IV., V.

[3] Robert Lemon, F.S.A., noted for other discoveries among the state papers. See Appendix to Scott's *Rob Roy.* Until the beginning of this century the English state papers were much neglected and carelessly kept. Since Mr. Lemon's time, however, they have been carefully studied and calendared. All such records are now kept in the Record-Office under the special charge of the Master of the Rolls through the deputy-keeper of the Records. For some adventures of the English state papers, see *Stories from the State Paper Office,* A. C. Ewald (Houghton, Mifflin, and Co., 1882).

[4] Repositories for documents.

office of Secretary,[1] and several papers relating to the Popish Trials[2] and the Rye-house Plot.[3] The whole was wrapped up in an envelope, superscribed *To Mr. Skinner, Merchant.* On examination, the large manuscript proved to be the long lost Essay on the Doctrines of Christianity, which, according to Wood and Toland,[4] Milton finished after the Restoration, and deposited with Cyriac Skinner. Skinner, it is well known, held the same political opinions with his illustrious friend. It is therefore probable, as Mr. Lemon conjectures, that he may have fallen under the suspicions of the government during that persecution of the Whigs which followed the dissolution of the Oxford Parliament,[5] and that, in consequence of a general seizure of his papers, this work may have been brought to the office in which it has been found. But whatever the adventures of the manuscript may have been, no doubt can exist that it is a genuine relic of the great poet.[6]

[1] See Introduction, 16.

[2] Arising from the bogus Popish Plot invented by Dr. Titus Oates, 1678. Among other extraordinary lies Dr. Oates testified that "the late John Milton" had been a member of a treasonable Papist Club in London!

[3] The Whig conspiracy to assassinate Charles II. in 1683. See Introduction, 19.

[4] Anthony à Wood (1632–1695), in his History of Oxford University (*Athenæ Oxonienses*, 1691), gives a life of Milton, who took the Master's degree there in 1635. This life is based largely upon notes furnished by one Aubrey, a contemporary of Milton, who knew some of his family and friends very well and drew from them much information. John Toland (1670–1722), the Deist, wrote an early Life of Milton, published in 1698.

[5] A Parliament summoned to Oxford by Charles II. in 1681. See Introduction, 19.

[6] The adventures of this manuscript are now better known than when this paragraph was written. After the publication of Macaulay's Essay, more documents were found by Mr. Lemon and others, showing that Mr. Daniel Skinner, a nephew of Cyriac, had been employed under Milton's own direction in preparing this manuscript for

2. Mr. Sumner,[1] who was commanded by His Majesty to edit and translate the treatise, has acquitted himself of his task in a manner honourable to his talents and to his character. His version is not indeed very easy or elegant[2]; but it is entitled to the praise of clearness and fidelity. His notes abound with interesting quotations, and have the rare merit of really elucidating the text. The preface is evidently the work of a sensible and candid man, firm in his own religious opinions, and tolerant towards those of others.

3. The book itself will not add much to the fame of Milton. It is, like all his Latin works, well written—though not exactly in the style of the prize essays of Oxford and Cambridge.[3] There is no elaborate imitation of

publication. It was to be published after Milton's death, which occurred in 1674 during the preparation of the book for the press. In 1675, accordingly, Mr. Skinner tried to get it printed, along with certain public letters written by Milton as Secretary of the Commonwealth, at the press of Elzevir in Amsterdam. The printer, Daniel Elzevir, looked over the manuscript, and was so alarmed by its contents that he notified the English government, saying that "there were many things in it which ought to be suppressed." The government thereupon obliged the Skinners to give the manuscript up. It was then thrown aside among other old papers until it was found one hundred and fifty years afterwards, as described above.

[1] Afterwards Lord Bishop of Winchester; at this time Royal Chaplain and Librarian. "His Majesty" is George the Fourth.

[2] Notice Macaulay's careful use throughout the essay of this word, which is often abused in common speech.

[3] Oxford and Cambridge, the two great English universities, have maintained in England a high standard in Latin style by encouraging prize compositions in prose and verse. Although Macaulay was himself an excellent classical scholar at Trinity College, Cambridge, we learn from his biography that Latin composition was never a very attractive exercise to him. "I never practised composition," he says in a letter, "a single hour since I have been at Cambridge." He is therefore a little scornful here about these prize essays; in fact, as we learn from his nephew, other men of his time wrote better Latin than he did.

classical antiquity, no scrupulous purity, none of the ceremonial cleanness which characterizes the diction of our academical Pharisees.[1] The author does not attempt to polish and brighten his composition into the Ciceronian[2] gloss and brilliancy. He does not, in short, sacrifice sense and spirit to pedantic refinements. The nature of his subject compelled him to use many words

> "That would have made Quintilian stare and gasp." [3]

But he writes with as much ease and freedom as if Latin were his mother-tongue; and where he is least happy, his failure seems to arise from the carelessness of a native, not from the ignorance of a foreigner. What Denham,[4] with great felicity, says of Cowley,[5] may be applied to

[1] The Pharisees were a sect of the Jews noted for their overzealous care about outward forms of religion, to the neglect of inward virtue of heart and soul. See *Gospel of St. Matthew*, Chap. xxiii. Even so the Latin essays of the English universities were beautiful outwardly but had no valuable contents.

[2] Like Cicero, the great Roman orator (106–43 B.C.), whose name is a proverb for the best Latin prose ever composed.

[3] *E.g.*, *praedestinatio*, *electio nationalis*, *reprobatio*, etc. This line is from Milton's *Sonnet XI.* Quintilian (35–96 A.D.) was a famous Roman teacher of Rhetoric. In his work upon *The Education of the Orator* he discusses many points of interest in Latin diction and style. His own taste was very careful and his admiration of Cicero's Latin was great.

[4] Sir John Denham (see Ward's *English Poets*), a poet and courtier of the reign of Charles I. In some lines on the *Death and Burial of Mr. Abraham Cowley among the ancient Poets*, he says:—

> "Horace's wit and Virgil's state
> He did not steal but emulate;
> And when he would like them appear,
> Their garb but not their clothes did wear."

[5] Abraham Cowley, the most popular poet of Milton's day; one of the great men of Macaulay's own college (Trinity College, Cambridge). He wrote many translations and imitations of classic authors, as well

him. He wears the garb but not the clothes of the ancients.[1]

4. Throughout the volume are discernible the traces of a powerful and independent mind, emancipated from the influence of authority, and devoted to the search of truth. He professes to form his system from the Bible alone; and his digest[2] of scriptural texts is certainly among the best that have appeared. But he is not always so happy in his inferences as in his citations.

5. Some of the heterodox[3] opinions which he avows seem to have excited considerable amazement; particularly his Arianism,[4] and his notions on the subject of polygamy.[5] Yet we can scarcely conceive that any person could have read the Paradise Lost without suspecting him of the former; nor do we think that any reader, acquainted with the history of his life, ought to be much startled at the latter. The opinions which he has expressed respecting

as English odes and prose essays. In politics he took the royalist side with Lord Falkland. Macaulay wrote a charming *Conversation between Mr. Abraham Cowley and Mr. John Milton* for *Knight's Quarterly* in 1823, which anticipates some of the paragraphs in this present essay, and might well be read in connection with it.

[1] *I.e.*, his ideas are clothed in the general form which the ancients would have used; but not in exactly the same words and phrases.

[2] Digest, a collection and abridgment of literary or scientific matter arranged in some convenient order.

[3] Heterodox, heretical, theologically incorrect.

[4] The theological tenets, upon the nature of Christ, of Arius, an Alexandrian priest of the fourth century. After a fierce battle in the church, these opinions were condemned as heresy by the General Council of Nicæa, 325 A.D. Milton, like Sir Isaac Newton, appears to be a semi-Arian, believing that Christ possessed a certain derivative deity, not, however, coeternal with the Father's.

[5] Milton maintains in his essay that, according of the Old Testament, marriage under polygamy was a genuine marriage. Polygamy, therefore, though it may be inexpedient, is not a crime like murder and stealing.

the nature of the Deity, the eternity of matter,[1] and the observation of the Sabbath,[2] might, we think, have caused more just surprise.

6. But we will not go into the discussion of these points. The book, were it far more orthodox, or far more heretical than it is, would not much edify or corrupt the present generation. The men of our time are not to be converted[3] or perverted by quartos.[4] A few more days, and this essay will follow the *Defensio Populi*[5] to the dust and silence of the upper shelf. The name of its author, and the remarkable circumstances attending its publication, will secure to it a certain degree of attention. For a month or two it will occupy a few minutes of chat in every drawing-room, and a few columns in every magazine; and it will then, to borrow the elegant language of the play-bills, be withdrawn, to make room for the forthcoming novelties.

7. We wish, however, to avail ourselves of the interest, transient as it may be, which this work has excited. The dexterous Capuchins[6] never choose to preach on the life

[1] "Matter is imperishable and eternal, because it is not only from God, but out of God," who is eternal. Milton would be classed now as a pantheistic materialist. He appears to hold that there is no radical distinction between body and soul, or between matter and spirit.

[2] "The command to keep the Sabbath was given to the Israelites for a variety of reasons, mostly peculiar to themselves;" "the law of the Sabbath having been repealed, it is evident that no day of worship has been appointed in its place," etc., etc. Milton is an Anti-Sabbatarian.

[3] Convert, to turn from one opinion to another; pervert, to turn from a true opinion to a false one.

[4] Books in the making of which the large sheets of printing paper are folded twice, making four leaves. The book Macaulay is reviewing was a quarto. This shape was a favorite form for important books in Milton's day. It is now little used except for books containing plates and maps like school geographies.

[5] See Introduction, 16.

[6] A younger branch of the Franciscan monks, named from the pecul-

and miracles of a saint, till they have awakened the devotional feelings of their auditors, by exhibiting some relic of him—a thread of his garment, a lock of his hair, or a drop of his blood. On the same principle, we intend to take advantage of the late interesting discovery, and, while this memorial of a great and good man is still in the hands of all, to say something of his moral and intellectual qualities. Nor, we are convinced, will the severest of our readers blame us if, on an occasion like the present, we turn for a short time from the topics of the day, to commemorate, in all love and reverence, the genius and virtues of John Milton, the poet, the statesman, the philosopher, the glory of English literature, the champion and the martyr of English liberty.[1]

8. It is by his poetry that Milton is best known ; and it is of his poetry that we wish first to speak. By the general suffrage of the civilised world, his place has been assigned among the greatest masters of the art. His detractors, however, though outvoted, have not been silenced. There are many critics, and some of great name, who contrive in the same breath to extol the poems and to decry the poet. The works, they acknowledge, considered in themselves, may be classed among the noblest productions of the human mind. But they will not allow the

iar cowl or *capuce* they wear. They are famous as preachers, as missionaries, and as martyrs.

§§ 8–49. First Division of the Essay: Milton's Poetry. §§ 8–18. *First topic discussed: Is Milton's place among the greatest masters? Yes, for he triumphed over the difficulty of writing poetry in the midst of a highly civilised society. A discussion of the relation of poetry to civilisation.*

[1] This sentence describes accurately the general subject of the essay. The essay is not a complete analysis of Milton's literary product, nor an elaborate biographical study. It is just a *Commemoration of the genius and virtues of John Milton*, with a general discussion of some of his moral and intellectual qualities.

author to rank with those great men who, born in the infancy of civilisation, supplied, by their own powers, the want of instruction, and, though destitute of models themselves, bequeathed to posterity models which defy imitation. Milton, it is said, inherited what his predecessors created; he lived in an enlightened age; he received a finished education; and we must therefore, if we would form a just estimate of his powers, make large deductions for these advantages.

9. We venture to say, on the contrary, paradoxical[1] as the remark may appear, that no poet has ever had to struggle with more unfavourable circumstances than Milton. He doubted, as he has himself owned, whether he had not been born "an age too late." For this notion Johnson[2] has thought fit to make him the butt of his clumsy ridicule. The poet, we believe, understood the nature of his art better than the critic. He knew that his poetical genius derived no advantage from the civilisation which surrounded him, or from the learning which he had acquired; and he looked back with something like regret to the ruder age of simple words and vivid impressions.

10. We think that, as civilisation advances, poetry almost necessarily declines. Therefore, though we admire those great works of imagination which have appeared in dark ages, we do not admire them the more because they have appeared in dark ages. On the contrary, we hold

[1] Paradox, an apparently absurd but true statement.

[2] Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709–1784), the dictator of literary opinion to the England of his time. The allusion is to his *Life of Milton* in his *Lives of the Poets*. On this subject Johnson says in this work that Milton was a "victim to the fumes of vain imagination" in that he thought he depended on seasons and climates; Johnson assures us that, however inferior to the heroes of better ages, "he might still be great among his contemporaries," "a giant among pygmies." For the relations of Johnson's *Life* to Macaulay's *Essay*, see Introduction, 4, 5, and 6.

that the most wonderful and splendid proof of genius is a great poem produced in a civilised age. We cannot understand why those who believe in that most orthodox[1] article of literary faith, that the earliest poets are generally the best, should wonder at the rule as if it were the exception. Surely the uniformity of the phænomenon[2] indicates a corresponding uniformity in the cause.

11. The fact is, that common observers reason from the progress of the experimental sciences to that of the imitative arts. The improvement of the former is gradual and slow. Ages are spent in collecting materials, ages more in separating and combining them. Even when a system has been formed, there is still something to add, to alter, or to reject. Every generation enjoys the use of a vast hoard bequeathed to it by antiquity, and transmits it, augmented by fresh acquisitions, to future ages. In these pursuits, therefore, the first speculators lie under great disadvantages, and, even when they fail, are entitled to praise. Their pupils, with far inferior intellectual powers, speedily surpass them in actual attainments. Every girl who has read Mrs. Marcet's[3] little dialogues on Political Economy, could teach Montague[4] or Wal-

[1] Orthodox, correct theologically; hence, correct in general.

[2] Now usually spelled phenomenon; "a thing appearing," something whose appearing requires explanation.

[3] Mrs. Marcet wrote a text-book for children called *Conversations on Political Economy*. The conversation is carried on by *Mrs. B.*, who expounds the principles of Adam Smith, Malthus, Say, and Sismondi, to *Caroline*, who asks the questions "which would be likely to arise in the mind of an intelligent young person." A letter of Maria Edgeworth's, written from the house of Mr. Ricardo in 1822, says: "It is now high fashion with blue ladies to talk political economy and make a great jabbering on the subject, while others who have more sense, like Mrs. Marcet, hold their tongues and listen."

[4] Charles Montague (1661–1715), afterwards Earl of Halifax; like Cowley a graduate of Trinity College, Cambridge; an intimate friend of Sir Isaac Newton. He became famous as Chancellor of the Ex-

pole[1] many lessons in finance. Any intelligent man may now, by resolutely applying himself for a few years to mathematics, learn more than the great Newton[2] knew after half a century of study and meditation.

12. But it is not thus with music, with painting, or with sculpture. Still less is it thus with poetry. The progress of refinement rarely supplies these arts with better objects of imitation. It may indeed improve the instruments which are necessary to the mechanical operations of the musician, the sculptor, and the painter. But language, the machine of the poet, is best fitted for his purpose in its rudest state. Nations, like individuals, first perceive, and then abstract. They advance from particular images to general terms. Hence the vocabulary of an enlightened society is philosophical, that of a half-civilized people is poetical.

13. This change in the language of men is partly the cause and partly the effect of a corresponding change in the nature of their intellectual operations, a change by which science gains and poetry loses. Generalisation is necessary to the advancement of knowledge, but particularity is indispensable to the creations of the imagination.

chequer under William III. for his extraordinary skill in finance. Under his advice and guidance the Bank of England was founded, and he took the measures also which began the national debt of England. See Macaulay, *History of England*, vol vii., chap. xix.

[1] Sir Robert Walpole (1676–1745), the great finance minister of George II., who developed especially the excise duties. His policy was devoted to preserving peace abroad and establishing principles of sound finance and of economical taxation at home.

[2] Sir Isaac Newton (1642–1727), another Fellow of Trinity, Cambridge, an unrivalled genius in mathematical speculation. His most famous book was entitled *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica*. His great discoveries were in optics, in gravitation, and in the invention of mathematical processes. See Hawthorne's *True Stories* for a little biography of this famous man.

In proportion as men know more and think more, they look less at individuals and more at classes. They therefore make better theories and worse poems. They give us vague phrases instead of images, and personified qualities instead of men. They may be better able to analyse human nature than their predecessors. But analysis is not the business of the poet. His office is to portray, not to dissect. He may believe in a moral sense, like Shaftesbury.[1] He may refer all human actions to self-interest like Helvetius,[2] or he may never think about the matter at all. His creed on such subjects will no more influence his poetry, properly so called, than the notions which a painter may have conceived respecting the lacrymal[3] glands, or the circulation of the blood, will affect the tears of his Niobe,[4]

[1] The third Lord Shaftesbury (1671–1713), an amiable and shy young man, for whom public-school life was too rough, and who therefore learned his Greek from Eliza Birch by the "natural method." His fame as a writer is chiefly due to a book on human actions entitled *Characteristics*. He maintains that men have a special sense which sees right and wrong as the eye sees light. He invented for this the term "moral sense," which phrase he may be said to have contributed to the English language.

[2] Helvetius (1715–1771), a popular philosopher in Parisian society about a generation before the French Revolution. He was a curious person, so vain of popular applause that he appeared once as a stage-dancer. His chief work, entitled *De l'Esprit* (*On the Human Mind*), maintained that self-interest was the spring of all human action, that there was no such thing as right and wrong apart from what is pleasant and painful. This, he says, is "Le secret de tout le monde." His book made a great stir, incurring even the notice of the Sorbonne and the Parliament of Paris.

[3] Lacrymal, secreting tears.

[4] In Greek mythology a queen whose pride in her children led her to make impious comparisons of them to Apollo and Artemis, the children of Latona. Her children were therefore slain by the arrows of these gods, while Niobe, after vainly trying to defend them, became changed into a rock, weeping forever.

or the blushes of his Aurora.[1] If Shakespeare had written a book on the motives of human actions, it is by no means certain that it would have been a good one. It is extremely improbable that it would have contained half so much able reasoning on the subject as is to be found in the Fable of the Bees. But could Mandeville[2] have created an Iago?[3] Well as he knew how to resolve characters into their elements, would he have been able to combine those elements in such a manner as to make up a man—a real, living, individual man?

14. Perhaps no person can be a poet, or can even enjoy poetry, without a certain unsoundness of mind, if anything which gives so much pleasure ought to be called unsoundness. By poetry we mean, not, of course, all writing in verse, nor even all good writing in verse. Our definition excludes many metrical compositions which, on other grounds, deserve the highest praise. By poetry we mean, the art of employing words in such a manner as to produce an illusion on the imagination, the art of doing by means of words what the painter does by means of colours. Thus the greatest of poets has described it, in lines universally admired for the vigour and felicity of their diction, and

[1] Aurora, the goddess of dawn, always rosy and blushing, according to Greek and Latin poetic fancy.

[2] Bernard de Mandeville (1670–1733), a satirical writer. The *Fable of the Bees* appeared in 1705. The moral of the fable is that it is the selfishness and extravagance, and even the vices of society, which make the market for labor. Thus luxury is the root of all civilisation, and "Private Vices, Publick Benefits." The fable narrates that certain Bees left their busy hive and went off to live a frugal life in a hollow tree, where by their injudicious temperance and virtue they all starved.

> " . . . Fools only strive
> To make a great, an honest hive."

[3] A principal character in Shakespeare's *Othello*, a famous villain.

still more valuable on account of the just notion which they convey of the art in which he excelled :

> "As imagination bodies forth
> The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
> Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
> A local habitation and a name."[1]

These are the fruits of the "fine frenzy" which he ascribes to the poet—a fine frenzy, doubtless, but still a frenzy. Truth, indeed, is essential to poetry ; but it is the truth of madness. The reasonings are just ; but the premises[2] are false. After the first suppositions have been made, everything ought to be consistent ; but those first suppositions require a degree of credulity which almost amounts to a partial and temporary derangement of the intellect. Hence, of all people, children are the most imaginative. They abandon themselves without reserve to every illusion. Every image which is strongly presented to their mental eye produces on them the effect of reality. No man, whatever his sensibility[3] may be, is ever affected by Hamlet or Lear,[4] as a little girl is affected by the story of poor Red Riding-hood. She knows that it is all false, that wolves cannot speak, that there are no wolves in England. Yet, in spite of her knowledge, she believes ; she weeps, she trembles ; she dares not go into a dark room lest she should feel the teeth of the monster at her throat. Such is the despotism of the imagination over uncultivated minds.

[1] *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act V., Sc. I.

[2] Premises, a term in logic ; better "premisses." It means a proposition, belief in which leads to belief in another proposition called a conclusion.

[3] In current English we are apt to use "sensitiveness" instead of "sensibility," in this meaning of "capacity for acute feeling." But notice the title of Jane Austen's novel, *Sense and Sensibility*.

[4] Shakespeare's well-known plays.

15. In a rude state of society, men are children with a greater variety of ideas. It is therefore in such a state of society that we may expect to find the poetical temperament in its highest perfection. In an enlightened age there will be much intelligence, much science, much philosophy, abundance of just classification and subtle analysis, abundance of wit and eloquence, abundance of verses, and even of good ones; but little poetry. Men will judge and compare; but they will not create. They will talk about the old poets, and comment on them, and to a certain degree enjoy them. But they will scarcely be able to conceive the effect which poetry produced on their ruder ancestors, the agony, the ecstasy, the plenitude of belief. The Greek Rhapsodists, according to Plato, could not recite Homer without almost falling into convulsions.[1] The Mohawk hardly feels the scalping-knife while he shouts his death-song.[2] The power which the ancient bards[3]

[1] Plato's *Ion*, pp. 535, 536. Socrates says to Ion, who was a Rhapsodist, or professional reciter of poetry, "When you produce your great effects, in the recitation of some striking passage, are you in your right mind? Does not your soul in an ecstasy seem to be among the persons and places of which she is speaking?"—"Yes," says Ion, "I must confess that at the tale of pity my eyes are filled with tears, and when I speak of heroes my hair stands on end and my heart beats."—"Strictly speaking such a one is not in his right mind." Plato (429–347 B.C.), the great Athenian philosopher, views poets exactly as Macaulay does here, as beings of an abnormal structure akin to mania. "Poets are winged and holy things," he says, "not be allowed to live in a well ordered state."

[2] Mohawks, a tribe of Indians in what is now the State of New York. They were the first tribe of this region to obtain firearms, and they were so conspicuous in the history of the early settlers that their name was used by the English for the Iroquois in general, and therefore became a proverbial expression for the fiercest Indians.

[3] A Celtic word for the national poets in Wales and Ireland. These singers of the deeds of heroes, of victories of the nation and tribe, and chanters of pedigrees, continue to be found in historic times.

of Wales and Germany exercised over their auditors seems to modern readers almost miraculous. Such feelings are very rare in a civilised community, and most rare among those who participate most in its improvements. They linger longest among the peasantry.

16. Poetry produces an illusion on the eye of the mind, as a magic lantern produces an illusion on the eye of the body. And, as the magic lantern acts best in a dark room, poetry effects its purpose most completely in a dark age. As the light of knowledge breaks in upon its exhibitions, as the outlines of certainty become more and more definite, and the shades of probability more and more distinct, the hues and lineaments of the phantoms which it calls up, grow fainter and fainter. We cannot unite the incompatible advantages of reality and deception, the clear discernment of truth and the exquisite enjoyment of fiction.

17. He who, in an enlightened and literary society, aspires to be a great poet, must first become a little child. He must take to pieces the whole web of his mind. He must unlearn much of that knowledge which has perhaps constituted hitherto his chief title to superiority. His very talents will be a hindrance to him. His difficulties will be proportioned to his proficiency in the pursuits which are fashionable among his contemporaries; and that proficiency will in general be proportioned to the vigour and activity of his mind. And it is well if, after all his sacrifices and exertions, his works do not resemble a lisping man, or a modern ruin. We have seen in our own time[1] great talents, intense labour, and long meditation, employed in

[1] The allusion here is probably to the poets of the "Lake School," especially to Wordsworth, whose effort to abandon the lofty diction which had grown fashionable in English poetry, and to return in his verses to the simple language of life's simple feelings was at first very offensive to his contemporaries. The *Lyrical Ballads* came out in 1798.

this struggle against the spirit of the age, and employed, we will not say absolutely in vain, but with dubious success and feeble applause.

18. If these reasonings be just, no poet has ever triumphed over greater difficulties than Milton. He received a learned education. He was a profound and elegant classical scholar; he had studied all the mysteries of Rabbinical[1] literature; he was intimately acquainted with every language of modern Europe from which either pleasure or information was then to be derived.[2] He was perhaps the only great poet of later times who has been distinguished by the excellence of his Latin verse. The genius of Petrarch[3] was scarcely of the first order; and his poems in the ancient language, though much praised by those who have never read them, are wretched compositions. Cowley, with all his admirable wit and ingenuity, had little imagination; nor indeed do we think his classical diction comparable to that of Milton. The authority of Johnson[4] is against us on this point. But Johnson had studied the bad writers of the middle ages till he had become utterly insensible to the Augustan[5] elegance, and was as ill quali-

§§ 18–20. *Second topic: Milton's Latin Poetry.*

[1] Jewish writings composed chiefly after the Christian era by the Rabbis or masters expounding the law. They enjoyed an authority almost equal to that of the sacred Scriptures.

[2] Milton read not only Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, but also French, Italian, Dutch, and Spanish.

[3] Francesco Petrarca (1304–1374), the first true reviver of classical learning in Europe after the middle ages He wrote a Latin epic, *Africa*, and was crowned with a laurel wreath for it in Rome. He wrote also Latin eclogues and epistles. His Latin was, however, mediæval; he was devoted to the ideal of restoring classic Latin to the world, but he had little direct knowledge of classic authors himself.

[4] See Introduction, 6.

[5] The Augustan age was the time of the Emperor Augustus, when Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Livy, and other great Roman writers lived.

fied to judge between two Latin styles, as a habitual drunkard to set up for a wine-taster.

19. Versification in a dead language is an exotic, a far-fetched, costly, sickly imitation of that which elsewhere may be found in healthful and spontaneous perfection. The soils on which this rarity flourishes are, in general, as ill-suited to the production of vigorous native poetry as the flower-pots of a hothouse to the growth of oaks. That the author of the Paradise Lost should have written the Epistle to Manso[1] was truly wonderful. Never before were such marked originality and such exquisite mimicry found together. Indeed, in all the Latin poems of Milton, the artificial manner indispensable to such works is admirably preserved; while, at the same time, the richness of his fancy and the elevation of his sentiments give to them a peculiar charm, an air of nobleness and freedom, which distinguishes them from all other writings of the same class. They remind us of the amusements of those angelic warriors who composed the cohort of Gabriel:

> "About him exercised heroic games
> The unarmed youth of heaven. But o'er their heads
> Celestial armoury, shield, helm, and spear,
> Hung bright, with diamond flaming and with gold."[2]

We cannot look upon the sportive exercises for which the genius of Milton ungirds itself, without catching a glimpse of the gorgeous and terrible panoply which it is accustomed to wear. The strength of his imagination tri-

The word became proverbial for any epoch when good taste prevailed in literature.

[1] Manso, Marquis of Villa, was the great man of Naples when Milton visited it. The old man was very kind to the young poet, making much of him and introducing him to other literary people. For this Milton wrote him on his return a beautiful epistle in Latin hexameters, one of his best-known Latin poems. See Introduction, 11.

[2] *Paradise Lost*, IV., 551–554.

umphed over every obstacle. So intense and ardent was the fire of his mind, that it not only was not suffocated beneath the weight of its fuel, but penetrated the whole superincumbent mass with its own heat and radiance.[1]

20. It is not our intention to attempt anything like a complete examination of the poetry of Milton. The public has long been agreed as to the merit of the most remarkable passages, the incomparable harmony of the numbers, and the excellence of that style which no rival has been able to equal, and no parodist[2] to degrade, which displays in their highest perfection the idiomatic[3] powers of the English tongue, and to which every ancient and every modern language has contributed something of grace, of energy, or of music. In the vast field of criticism on which we are entering, innumerable reapers have already put their sickles. Yet the harvest is so abundant that the negligent search of a straggling gleaner may be rewarded with a sheaf.

21. The most striking characteristic of the poetry of Milton is the extreme remoteness of the associations by means of which it acts on the reader. Its effect is produced, not so much by what it expresses as by what it suggests, not so much by the ideas which it directly conveys, as by other ideas which are connected with them. He electrifies the mind through conductors.[4] The most unimaginative man must understand the Iliad. Homer gives him no choice, and requires from him no exertion;

[1] For Milton's Latin Poems, see Milton's Poems in the edition of Masson, 3 vols. (Macmillan). Perhaps the best of them all is the *Epitaphium Damonis*, dedicated to his friend, Charles Diodati.

[2] Parodist, a writer of ludicrous imitations of poetry.

[3] Idiomatic, peculiar to a certain language.

[4] As electricity is carried to any remote place by a good conductor, so Milton's vocabulary brings ideas from a vast distance into the mind of the reader.

but takes the whole upon himself, and sets his images in so clear a light that it is impossible to be blind to them. The works of Milton cannot be comprehended or enjoyed, unless the mind of the reader co-operate with that of the writer. He does not paint a finished picture or play for a mere passive listener. He sketches, and leaves others to fill up the outline. He strikes the keynote, and expects his hearer to make out the melody.

22. We often hear of the magical influence of poetry. The expression in general means nothing, but, applied to the writings of Milton, it is most appropriate. His poetry acts like an incantation. Its merit lies less in its obvious meaning than in its occult[1] power. There would seem, at first sight, to be no more in his words than in other words. But they are words of enchantment. No sooner are they pronounced, than the past is present, and the distant near. New forms of beauty start at once into existence, and all the burial-places of the memory give up their dead. Change the structure of the sentence; substitute one synonym for another, and the whole effect is destroyed. The spell loses its power; and he who should then hope to conjure with it, would find himself as much mistaken as Cassim in the Arabian tale, when he stood crying: "Open Wheat," "Open Barley," to the door which obeyed no sound but "Open Sesame!"[2] The miserable failure of Dryden,[3] in his attempt to rewrite some parts of the Paradise Lost, is a remarkable instance of this.

§§ 20–25. *Third topic: Some striking characteristics of Milton's poetic methods. A description of the effect produced by the peculiar suggestiveness of the words he uses. Examples, L'Allegro, and Il Penseroso.*

[1] Occult, concealed, "where more is meant than meets the ear."

[2] In old versions of the *Arabian Nights* was included a famous Turkish tale, "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves." "Sesame" is a kind of grain.

[3] John Dryden (1631–1700), the great poet of the next generation in England. He composed an opera called *The State of Innocence*,

23. In support of these observations, we may remark that scarcely any passages in the poems of Milton are more generally known, or more frequently repeated, than those which are little more than muster-rolls of names.[1] They are not always more appropriate or more melodious than other names. But they are charmed names. Every one of them is the first link in a long chain of associated ideas. Like the dwelling-place of our infancy revisited in manhood, like the song of our country heard in a strange land, they produce upon us an effect wholly independent of their intrinsic value. One transports us back to a remote period of history. Another places us among the novel scenes and manners of a distant country. A third evokes all the dear classical recollections of childhood, the school-room, the dog-eared Virgil, the holiday, and the prize. A fourth brings before us the splendid phantoms of chivalrous romance, the trophied lists,[2] the embroidered housings,[3] the quaint devices, the haunted forests, the enchanted gardens, the achievements of enamoured knights, and the smiles of rescued princesses.

of which the libretto was manufactured out of *Paradise Lost*. Here are some verses :

> " If thou art he, but O, how changed from him,
> Companion of my Arms, how wan, how dim,
> How faded all thy glories are! I see
> Myself too well, and my own change in thee."

Milton is said to have given Dryden leave to do this work, saying, good-naturedly, "Ay, ay, you may tag my verses." A "tag" was a silver ornament worn on the ends of ribbons in those days for show. Milton's allusion is to the tinkling rhymes on the ends of Dryden's verses.

[1] Specimens of these "muster-rolls of names" are found in *Paradise Lost*, I., 580–585; II., 525–545; IV., 276–282; and elsewhere.

[2] Lists, the space enclosed by the ropes or barriers at a tournament. Trophied, adorned with trophies, the spoils taken from conquered enemies.

[3] Housings, the trappings of the horses, especially cloths or covers, more or less ornamental, laid over the saddle.

24. In none of the works of Milton is his peculiar manner more happily displayed than in the Allegro and the Penseroso. It is impossible to conceive that the mechanism of language can be brought to a more exquisite degree of perfection. These poems differ from others as atar[1] of roses differs from ordinary rose water, the close packed essence from the thin diluted mixture. They are, indeed, not so much poems as collections of hints, from each of which the reader is to make out a poem for himself. Every epithet is a text for a stanza.[2]

25. The Comus and the Samson Agonistes are works which, though of very different merit, offer some marked points of resemblance. They are both lyric poems in the form of plays. There are perhaps no two kinds of composition so essentially dissimilar as the drama and the ode.[3] The business of the dramatist is to keep himself out of sight, and to let nothing appear but his characters. As soon as he attracts notice to his personal feelings, the illusion is broken. The effect is as unpleasant as that which is produced on the stage by the voice of a prompter, or the entrance of a scene-shifter. Hence it was that the tragedies of Byron[4] were his least successful performances.

§§ 25-30. *Fourth topic: Milton's dramatic poetry. Like the Greek drama, it has much of the lyric character. The Greek drama and Samson Agonistes; Comus and the Italian masques.*

[1] Atar of roses, usually written "attar," "otto"; an essential oil of roses made in Turkey. It takes one hundred and fifty pounds of rose-leaves to make an ounce of the atar.

[2] Macaulay wrote "canto" in the first edition. A stanza is a series of lines grouped together in a fixed order, composing a part of a poem. A canto is a much larger thing, a division of some length in a long poem.

[3] Lyric, delineating the poet's own thoughts and feelings. Drama, a story of passions and feelings not belonging to the poet, conveyed by action and representation of persons. Ode, a lyric poem of the most exalted kind, expressing the highest feelings of the poet.

[4] Byron (1788-1824) was reviewed in the *Edinburgh* in 1830 by Ma-

They resemble those pasteboard pictures invented by the friend of children, Mr. Newbery, in which a single movable head goes round twenty different bodies; so that the same face looks out upon us successively, from the uniform of a hussar, the furs of a judge, and the rags of a beggar. In all the characters, patriots and tyrants, haters and lovers, the frown and sneer of Harold [1] were discernible in an instant. But this species of egotism, though fatal to the drama, is the inspiration of the ode. It is the part of the lyric poet to abandon himself, without reserve, to his own emotions.

26. Between these hostile elements many great men have endeavored to effect an amalgamation, but never with complete success. The Greek Drama, on the model of which the Samson was written, sprang from the Ode. The dialogue was engrafted on the chorus,[2] and naturally partook of its character. The genius of the greatest of the Athenian dramatists co-operated with the circumstances under which tragedy made its first appearance. Æschylus [3] was,

caulay. The idea here expressed about Byron is in that paper expanded and explained.

[1] Byron's first and best-known poem, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, describes in the character of the hero his own melancholy spirit journeying over Europe.

[2] The Greek Drama was evolved from choruses sung by bands of dancing villagers around the altars of harvest gods. During these hymns they imitated the actions of the gods and heroes which their songs described. Afterwards a narrator and actor joined in dialogue with them. Finally several actors and a regular stage were introduced and the Drama was thus created. But, as Macaulay says, the dramatic element was to the end subordinated to the lyric.

[3] Æschylus (525–456 B.C.), the first of the three great Greek tragedians. As to the "Oriental tincture" in his poetry, it cannot be true that he borrowed anything from Asia. Rather was his spirit a kindred one to that of the Orient, for in common with the poets and prophets of the Hebrew race he had a deep sense of the mystical meaning in human life, while in common with the Greek race he could express

head and heart, a lyric poet. In his time, the Greeks had far more intercourse with the East than in the days of Homer; and they had not yet acquired that immense superiority in war, in science, and in the arts, which, in the following generation, led them to treat the Asiatics with contempt. From the narrative of Herodotus,[1] it should seem that they still looked up with the veneration of disciples to Egypt and Assyria. At this period, accordingly, it was natural that the literature of Greece should be tinctured with the Oriental style. And that style, we think, is clearly discernible in the works of Pindar[2] and Æschylus. The latter often reminds us of the Hebrew writers. The Book of Job, indeed, in conduct and diction, bears a considerable resemblance to some of his dramas. Considered as plays, his works are absurd: considered as choruses, they are above all praise. If, for instance, we examine the address of Clytaemnestra to Agamemnon on his return,[3] or the description of the seven Argive chiefs,[4] by the principles of dramatic writing, we shall instantly condemn them as monstrous. But, if we forget the charac-

his ideas under beautiful plastic forms. Milton resembles Æschylus in his fondness for imagining vast incorporeal personages and allegorical beings.

[1] Herodotus (484–424 B.C.), one of the earliest writers of Greek History. He depicts, as in a drama, the evolution of the struggle, centuries old, between Asia and Europe for control of the Mediterranean world. His history culminates in the victory of Greece at Marathon and Salamis. In the course of his work he has much to say in long digressions upon Egypt and Assyria.

[2] Pindar (522–443 B.C.) writer of odes, chiefly in honor of victors at various sacred national games.

[3] In the greatest play of Æschylus, called the *Agamemnon*, translated into English by Robert Browning (*Aristophanes' Apology*) and by Edward Fitzgerald (*The Agamemnon*).

[4] In the *Seven Chiefs against Thebes*, telling how in the quarrel of the house of Cadmus for the sovereignty of Thebes, that city was besieged by seven Argive champions.

ters, and think only of the poetry, we shall admit that it has never been surpassed in energy and magnificence. Sophocles made the Greek drama as dramatic as was consistent with its original form. His portraits of men have a sort of similarity; but it is the similarity, not of painting, but of a bas-relief. It suggests a resemblance, but it does not produce an illusion.[1] Euripides attempted to carry the reform further. But it was a task far beyond his powers, perhaps beyond any powers. Instead of correcting what was bad, he destroyed what was excellent. He substituted crutches for stilts, bad sermons for good odes.[2]

27. Milton, it is well known, admired Euripides highly —much more highly than, in our opinion, Euripides deserved. Indeed the caresses which this partiality leads him to bestow on "sad Electra's poet,"[3] sometimes remind us of the beautiful Queen of Fairyland kissing the long ears of Bottom.[4] At all events, there can be no doubt

[1] Sophocles (495–406 B.C.), the second and greatest of the Greek tragedians. He excelled in sharp and delicate character-drawing; and he knew, in spite of tragedy's "sceptred pall," how to exhibit the complexities of human life as it is. Of course all his work was done under the traditions of the Greek stage. The Greek drama is always suggestive of sculpture rather than of painting; it aims at symmetry, rhythm, and equipoise, rather than at vivacity and color. The art of Sophocles in particular is characterized by a refined and balanced perfection wrought quietly out in harmonious and beautiful details. But it is quite too much to say that it "does not produce an illusion."

[2] Euripides (480–406 B.C.), the third of the Greek tragedians. Macaulay modified this unfavorable judgment of Euripides in his later years. He wrote in his copy of Euripides in 1835, "I can hardly account for the contempt which I felt, at school and college, for Euripides. I own I like him better now than Sophocles." But there is some justice nevertheless in these strictures on the art of Euripides. In trying to adapt the form of Greek tragedy to the representation of scenes from life Euripides overpassed the limits of possibility.

[3] See Milton's *Sonnet VIII.*

[4] See Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act iv., Sc. 1.

that his veneration for the Athenian, whether just or not, was injurious to the Samson Agonistes. Had he taken Æschylus for his model, he would have given himself up to the lyric inspiration, and poured out profusely all the treasures of his mind, without bestowing a thought on those dramatic proprieties which the nature of the work rendered it impossible to preserve. In the attempt to reconcile things in their own nature inconsistent, he has failed, as every one else must have failed. We cannot identify ourselves with the characters as in a good play. We cannot identify ourselves with the poet, as in a good ode. The conflicting ingredients, like an acid and an alkali [1] mixed, neutralize each other. We are by no means insensible to the merits of this celebrated piece, to the severe dignity of the style, the graceful and pathetic solemnity of the opening speech, or the wild and barbaric melody which gives so striking an effect to the choral passages. But we think it, we confess, the least successful effort of the genius of Milton.

28. The Comus is framed on the model of the Italian Masque,[2] as the Samson is framed on the model of the Greek Tragedy. It is certainly the noblest performance of the kind which exists in any language. It is as far superior to the Faithful Shepherdess as the Faithful Shep-

[1] Two groups of substances of which each group possesses the quality of destroying the characteristic chemical properties of the members of the other group.

[2] A Masque or mask, a form of dramatic spectacle much in vogue in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It contained spoken verse, music, and dancing. "The origin of the dramatic masque of the sixteenth century has been traced by antiquaries as far back as the time of Edward III. But in its perfected shape it was a genuine offspring of the English Renaissance, a cross between the English mystery-play and the Greek drama." As the taste for open-air pageant died out, masques yielded to operas, their modern equivalent. They flourished most in the reigns of Henry VIII., Elizabeth, James I., and Charles I.

herdess is to the Aminta, or the Aminta to the Pastor Fido.[1] It was well for Milton that he had here no Euripides to mislead him. He understood and loved the literature of modern Italy. But he did not feel for it the same veneration which he entertained for the remains of Athenian and Roman poetry, consecrated by so many lofty and endearing recollections. The faults, moreover, of his Italian predecessors were of a kind to which his mind had a deadly antipathy. He could stoop to a plain style, sometimes even to a bald style; but false brilliancy was his utter aversion. His muse had no objection to a russet attire; but she turned with disgust from the finery of Guarini, as tawdry and as paltry as the rags of a chimney-sweeper on May-day.[2] Whatever ornaments she wears are of massive gold, not only dazzling to the sight, but capable of standing the severest test of the crucible.[3]

29. Milton attended in the Comus to the distinction which he neglected in the Samson. He made his Masque what it ought to be, essentially lyrical, and dramatic only in semblance. He has not attempted a fruitless struggle against a defect inherent in the nature of that species of composition; and he has therefore succeeded

[1] *The Faithful Shepherdess*, by John Fletcher (1579–1625), the literary partner of Beaumont. "It is a lyric poem, in semi-dramatic shape, to be judged only as such, and as such almost faultless." Swinburne. The *Aminta* is by Tasso (1544–1595). The *Pastor Fido* is by Guarini (1537–1612). These three pastoral dramas are all of about the same date, depicting the loves of swains and shepherdesses.

[2] See Charles Lamb's essay on Chimney-sweepers, *Essays of Elia*. May-day was the great holiday for the poor little wretches, who were forced in Macaulay's youth to climb up the inside of English chimneys to clean out the soot. They went about decorated on this day with ribbons and garlands.

[3] Crucible, a vessel or melting pot for chemical tests. The word is connected with "crock, crockery."

wherever success was not impossible. The speeches must be read as majestic soliloquies; and he who so reads them will be enraptured with their eloquence, their sublimity, and their music. The interruptions of the dialogue, however, impose a constraint upon the writer, and break the illusion of the reader. The finest passages are those which are lyric in form as well as in spirit. "I should much commend," says the excellent Sir Henry Wotton,[1] in a letter to Milton, "the tragical part, if the lyrical did not ravish me with a certain Dorique[2] delicacy in your songs and odes, whereunto I must plainly confess to you I have seen yet nothing parallel in our language." The criticism was just. It is when Milton escapes from the shackles of the dialogue, when he is discharged from the labor of uniting two incongruous styles, when he is at liberty to indulge his choral raptures without reserve, that he rises even above himself. Then, like his own good Genius bursting from the earthly form and weeds[3] of Thyrsis,[4] he stands forth in celestial freedom and beauty; he seems to cry exultingly—

> "Now my task is smoothly done
> I can fly or I can run,"

[1] Sir Henry Wotton (1568-1639), a wit and scholar of James the First's court. Admired and trusted by the King, he might have had high place in English history had he been willing to become one of the courtiers and advisers of James. But he chose pleasanter paths of literary and political life. He was made at his own request ambassador to Venice, as he said, "to tell lies for the good of his country." He was promoted thence to be Provost of Eton, becoming a neighbor and friend of Milton. See Walton's *Lives* for a beautiful account of him.

[2] Greek pastoral poetry was written in Doric Greek of Sicily. Hence "Doric" means "pastoral or rural in sound." "The tragical part" means simply the dialogue.

[3] An old Saxon word for a garment, now disused except in the phrase "widow's weeds."

[4] Thyrsis, a name for shepherds in Greek pastoral poetry. The verses are lines 1012, 1013 of *Comus*.

to skim the earth, to soar above the clouds, to bathe in the Elysian[1] dew of the rainbow, and to inhale the balmy smells of nard and cassia,[2] which the musky wings of the zephyr scatter through the cedared alleys of the Hesperides.[3]

30. There are several of the minor poems of Milton on which we would willingly make a few remarks.[4] Still more willingly would we enter into a detailed examination of that admirable poem, the Paradise Regained, which, strangely enough, is scarcely ever mentioned except as an instance of the blindness of that parental affection which men of letters bear towards the offspring of their intellects. That Milton was mistaken in preferring this work, excellent as it is, to the Paradise Lost, we must readily admit.[5] But we are sure that the superiority of the Paradise Lost to the Paradise Regained is not more decided than the superiority of the Paradise Regained to

§§ 30–47. *Fifth topic: Paradise Lost. Parallel between Milton and Dante. A discussion of Milton's superiority in the management of the agency of supernatural beings.*

[1] Elysium, the abode of the blessed, according to Greek mythology. All these pretty phrases are quoted from the same song in *Comus*, vss. 774 to the end.

[2] "All thy garments smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia." *Psalms* xlv. 8. Milton's phrases are often culled from the English Bible.

[3] Hesperides, daughters of Hesperus, who dwell in some mysterious earthly paradise, lying in the unknown West (in Greek, Hesperos).

[4] Macaulay dismisses in this little sentence *Lycidas*, and the great *Ode on the Nativity*, without further allusion, together with a large number of other interesting short poems. The student of Milton must be prepared to supplement Macaulay's essay with many other books. See Suggestions for Teachers and Students, iii. (2).

[5] There is no evidence that Milton thought this work superior to *Paradise Lost*. His nephew, Philips, simply says that when people said it was inferior, "he could not hear with patience any such thing related to him." It is a short poem of three books, telling very simply of Christ's temptation.

every poem which has since made its appearance. But our limits prevent us from discussing the point at length. We hasten on to that extraordinary production which the general suffrage of critics has placed in the highest class of human compositions.

31. The only poem of modern times which can be compared with the Paradise Lost is the Divine Comedy.[1] The subject of Milton in some points resembled that of Dante; but he has treated it in a widely different manner. We cannot, we think, better illustrate our opinion respecting our own great poet than by contrasting him with the father of Tuscan[2] literature.

32. The poetry of Milton differs from that of Dante as the hieroglyphics[3] of Egypt differed from the picture-writing of Mexico. The images which Dante employs speak for themselves: they stand simply for what they are. Those of Milton have a signification which is often discernible only to the initiated. Their value depends less on what they directly represent than on what they remotely suggest. However strange, however grotesque[4] may be the appearance which Dante undertakes to describe, he never shrinks from describing it. He gives us the shape, the colour, the sound, the smell, the taste; he counts the

[1] The English name by which Dante's great poem is known. Dante called it *Commedia*, because the ending is not tragical. His admirers called it "Divine."

[2] Dante was a citizen of Florence of Tuscany, and was the first famous writer in the native Italian of that land.

[3] The picture-writing of the Indians is always a rude representation of the thing signified. Even so Dante represents things directly. But the Egyptian hieroglyphics represent words or syllables, or it may be letters only. So Milton's words suggest ideas remote from themselves, and his descriptions are not intelligible unless you know the inner meanings of his words.

[4] Grotesque, "found in a grotto;" fantastic, like the grotto-work of the Renaissance. Compare "antic," like the antique.

numbers; he measures the size. His similes are the illustrations of a traveller. Unlike those of other poets, and especially of Milton, they are introduced in a plain, business-like manner, not for the sake of any beauty in the objects from which they are drawn, not for the sake of any ornament which they may impart to the poem, but simply in order to make the meaning of the writer as clear to the reader as it is to himself. The ruins of the precipice which led from the sixth to the seventh circle of hell[1] were like those of the rock which fell into the Adige on the south of Trent.[2] The cataract of Phlegethon[3] was like that of Aqua Cheta at the monastery of St. Benedict.[4] The place where the heretics were confined in burning tombs resembled the vast cemetery of Arles.[5]

33. Now, let us compare with the exact details of Dante the dim intimations of Milton. We will cite a few examples. The English poet has never thought of taking the measure of Satan. He gives us merely a vague idea of vast bulk. In one passage, the fiend lies stretched out huge in length, floating many a rood, equal in size to the earth-born enemies of Jove, or to the sea-monster which the mariner mis-

[1] Dante's poem represents him as descending, circle after circle, round the sides of the pit of hell. In each round he meets different scenes of punishment arranged for different sorts of crime, the lowest being the worst.

[2] The Adige, a foaming mountain torrent, full of wild bowlders, running between the lofty hills of the Brenner pass. On it stands the city of Trent.

[3] "The Fire-river," one of the streams of the under-world in Greek myth.

[4] Near Naples.

[5] Arles is in France, near the mouth of the Rhone. "As at Arles, where the Rhone stagnates, sepulchres make all the places uneven; so did they here. . . . Among the tombs flames were scattered. All their lids were lifted and dire laments were issuing forth."—*Inferno*, Canto IX.

takes for an island.[1] When he addresses himself to battle against the guardian angels, he stands like Teneriffe[2] or Atlas; his stature reaches the sky. Contrast with these descriptions the lines in which Dante has described the gigantic spectre of Nimrod.[3] "His face seemed to me as long and as broad as the ball[4] of St. Peter's at Rome, and his other limbs were in proportion; so that the bank, which concealed him from the waist downwards, nevertheless showed so much of him that three tall Germans[5] would in vain have attempted to reach to his hair." We are sensible that we do no justice to the admirable style of the Florentine poet. But Mr. Cary's translation[6] is not at hand; and our version, however rude, is sufficient to illustrate our meaning.

34. Once more, compare the lazar-house[7] in the eleventh book of the Paradise Lost with the last ward of Malebolge in Dante.[8] Milton avoids the loathsome details, and takes refuge in indistinct but solemn and tremendous imagery—Despair hurrying from couch to couch to mock the wretches with his attendance; Death shaking his dart over

[1] *Paradise Lost*, Book I, verse 194; Book IV., verse 985.

[2] The Peak of Teneriffe is on the largest of the Canary Islands, off the coast of Africa. It is 12,200 feet high. Atlas is a mountain in Morocco, more than 12,000 feet high.

[3] *Inferno*, Canto XXXI.

[4] The "pine cone" of bronze, from the Mausoleum of Hadrian, in Dante's time stood in the fore court of St. Peter's. It is now in the Vatican Garden. "Ball" is a mistranslation.

[5] "Frieslanders," supposed to be very tall.

[6] Cary's translation remains the standard poetical translation of the Divine Comedy. For students the prose translation of Charles Eliot Norton (3 vols., octavo. Houghton, Mifflin & Co.) is rather to be commended

[7] Lazar-house, Italian lazaretto, a hospital for those diseased, named for Lazarus in the parable.

[8] *Paradise Lost*, Book XI., verse 567; *Inferno*, Canto XXIX. "Malebolge is a place in Hell, all of stone, and of an iron color."—Canto XVIII.

them, but, in spite of supplications, delaying to strike. What says Dante? "There was such a moan there as there would be if all the sick who, between July and September, are in the hospitals of Valdichiana, and of the Tuscan swamps, and of Sardinia,[1] were in one pit together; and such a stench was issuing forth as is wont to issue from decayed limbs."

35. We will not take upon ourselves the invidious office of settling precedency between two such writers. Each, in his own department, is incomparable; and each, we may remark, has, wisely or fortunately, taken a subject adapted to exhibit his peculiar talent to the greatest advantage. The Divine Comedy[2] is a personal narrative. Dante is the eye-witness and ear-witness of that which he relates. He is the very man who has heard the tormented spirits crying out for the second death,[3] who has read the dusky characters on the portal within which there is no hope,[4] who has hidden his face from the terrors of the Gorgon,[5] who has fled from the hooks and the seething pitch of Barbariccia and Draghignazzo.[6] His own hands have grasped the shaggy sides of Lucifer.[7] His own feet have climbed the mountain[8] of expiation. His own brow has been marked

[1] These geographical names are all of unhealthy places belonging to Italy.

[2] "The personages of Dante are all from real life. They are men and women undergoing actual experiences. Their characters and fates are, what all human characters and fates really are, types of spiritual law."

[3] *Inferno*, Canto I.

[4] On the doors of Hell were written, "All ye that enter here leave Hope behind."—Canto III.

[5] Canto IX.

[6] The names of two of the fiends in the weird scene in Canto XXI., who plunge sinners into a pit full of burning pitch.

[7] Dante climbs out of Hell by clinging to and crawling up the body of the giant Lucifer.—Canto XXXIV.

[8] The Mount of Purgatory, up which Dante climbs on the way from the Pit of Hell to the Heights of Heaven.

by the purifying angel.[1] The reader would throw aside such a tale in incredulous disgust unless it were told with the strongest air of veracity, with a sobriety even in its horrors, with the greatest precision and multiplicity in its details. The narrative of Milton in this respect differs from that of Dante, as the adventures of Amadis[2] differ from those of Gulliver.[3] The author of Amadis would have made his book ridiculous if he had introduced those minute particulars which give such a charm to the work of Swift, the nautical observations, the affected delicacy about names, the official documents transcribed at full length, and all the unmeaning gossip and scandal of the court, springing out of nothing, and tending to nothing. We are not shocked at being told that a man, who lived nobody knows when, saw many very strange sights; and we can easily abandon ourselves to the illusion of the romance. But when Lemuel Gulliver, surgeon, resident at Rotherhithe,[4] tells us of pygmies,[5] and giants, flying islands and philosophising horses, nothing but such circumstantial touches could produce for a single moment a deception on the imagination.

36. Of all the poets who have introduced into their works the agency of supernatural beings, Milton has suc-

[1] The angel who, at the entrance to Purgatory, marks Dante's brow with seven P's for the seven deadly sins (*peccata*). These marks disappear as he goes upward.

[2] The hero of a popular romance of chivalry, *Amadis of Gaul.*

[3] In *Gulliver's Travels*, the best known work of Dean Swift (1667–1745).

[4] An English village, to which Gulliver retired after his travels.

[5] Pygmy, a Greek word, describing a people of dwarfs in ancient Greek legend, who were supposed to measure one cubit (*pygmé*) and to live in Africa. Such dwarf people have been found by recent explorers all the way from Egypt to the Cape of Good Hope. Macaulay uses the word here, as it is often used in English, as a general term for dwarfs.

ceeded best. Here Dante decidedly yields to him; and as this is a point on which many rash and ill-considered judgments have been pronounced, we feel inclined to dwell on it a little longer. The most fatal error which a poet can possibly commit in the management of his machinery, is that of attempting to philosophise too much. Milton has been often censured for ascribing to spirits many functions of which spirits must be incapable. But these objections, though sanctioned by eminent names, originate, we venture to say, in profound ignorance of the art of poetry.

37. What is spirit? What are our own minds, the portion of spirit with which we are best acquainted? We observe certain phænomena. We cannot explain them into material causes. We therefore infer that there exists something which is not material. But of this something we have no idea. We can define it only by negatives. We can reason about it only by symbols. We use the word, but we have no image of the thing; and the business of poetry is with images, and not with words. The poet uses words indeed; but they are merely the instruments of his art, not its objects. They are the materials which he is to dispose in such a manner as to present a picture to the mental eye. And if they are not so disposed, they are no more entitled to be called poetry than a bale of canvass and a box of colours to be called a painting.

38. Logicians may reason about abstractions. But the great mass of mankind can never feel an interest in them. They must have images. The strong tendency of the multitude, in all ages and nations, to idolatry, can be explained on no other principle. The first inhabitants of Greece, there is every reason to believe, worshipped one invisible deity.[1] But the necessity of having something

[1] All this is a doubtful speculation. The first inhabitants of Greece never were worshippers of one God. It is true that, as civilisation advances in Greece, the number of Greek deities seems to us to increase.

more definite to adore produced, in a few centuries, the innumerable crowd of Gods and Goddesses. In like manner, the ancient Persians thought it impious to exhibit the Creator under a human form. Yet even these transferred to the sun the worship which, speculatively, they considered due only to the Supreme Mind. The history of the Jews is the record of a continued struggle between pure Theism, supported by the most terrible sanctions, and the strangely fascinating desire of having some visible and tangible object of adoration. Perhaps none of the secondary causes which Gibbon [1] has assigned for the rapidity with which Christianity spread over the world, while Judaism scarcely ever acquired a proselyte, operated more powerfully than this feeling. God, the uncreated, the incomprehensible, the invisible, attracted few worshippers. A philosopher might admire so noble a conception, but the crowd turned away in disgust from words which presented no image to their minds. It was before Deity embodied in a human form—walking among men, partaking of their infirmities, leaning on their bosoms, weeping over their graves, slumbering in the manger, bleeding on the cross—that the prejudices of the Synagogue,[2] and the doubts of the Academy,[3] and the pride of the Portico,[4] and the fasces

But this was because the Greek religious and æsthetic imagination deepened, so that the national power to represent deity in visible form increased. The national imaginative gifts, as well as the gradual grouping of many local deities in one Olympus, produced the "idolatrous" results described in the text. It was only slowly that the thinkers of the Greek race reached the idea of one invisible Godhead manifested in all gods.

[1] See, for the famous Five Causes of the Growth of Christianity, Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ch. xv.

[2] The Jewish congregation of worshippers.

[3] The most sceptical school of Greek Philosophy. It was named from the sacred grove of the hero Academos, in which Plato and Aristotle held their schools.

[4] Portico, *i.e.*, the Stoa Pœcilé or Painted Porch, whence the Stoic

of the Lictor,[1] and the swords of thirty legions, were humbled in the dust! Soon after Christianity had achieved its triumph, the principle which had assisted it began to corrupt it. It became a new Paganism. Patron saints assumed the offices of household gods. St. George[2] took the place of Mars; St. Elmo[3] consoled the mariner for the loss of Castor and Pollux; the Virgin Mother and Cecilia[4] succeeded to Venus and the Muses. The fascination of sex and loveliness was again joined to that of celestial dignity, and the homage of chivalry was blended with that of religion. Reformers have often made a stand against these feelings, but never with more than apparent and partial success. The men who demolished the images in cathedrals have not always been able to demolish those which were enshrined in their minds. It would not be difficult to show that in politics the same rule holds good.

philosophers took their name. They were disciples of Zeno (about 300 B.C.). That part of their philosophy which has been remembered best gives rules for conduct of life. A haughty superiority to the sorrows and joys of life and an aristocratic aloofness from the common herd of mankind marked their ethical practice.

[1] The authority of the executive officers of Roman State was symbolised by the *fasces* or the axe and bundle of rods carried by an attendant called a Lictor.

[2] St. George of Cappadocia, the warrior-saint and dragon-slayer, a great saint of the Eastern Church. His fame was carried to Europe by the Crusaders; his day was made a holiday in the Western Church in 1222. After Edward III. he is noted specially as the patron-saint of England. The historical matter in his legend is very obscure, but he is said to have been martyred in Diocletian's persecution in 303 A.D.

[3] St. Elmo, a patron of Italian sailors. "St. Elmo's fire" is the name given to the electric flames often seen about the masts and yards of ships. This was attributed to Castor and Pollux in ancient times.

[4] St. Cecilia (230 A.D.), patron-saint of church music. Her legend says that she sang praises to God just before her execution. St. Cecilia's Day is the occasion in England of yearly musical festivals. Handel's *Messiah* was written for such a celebration.

Doctrines, we are afraid, must generally be embodied before they can excite a strong public feeling. The multitude is more easily interested for the most unmeaning badge, or the most insignificant name, than for the most important principle.

39. From these considerations, we infer that no poet who should affect that metaphysical accuracy, for the want of which Milton has been blamed, would escape a disgraceful failure. Still, however, there was another extreme which, though far less dangerous, was also to be avoided. The imaginations of men are in a great measure under the control of their opinions. The most exquisite art of poetical colouring can produce no illusion, when it is employed to represent that which is at once perceived to be incongruous and absurd. Milton wrote in an age of philosophers and theologians. It was necessary, therefore, for him to abstain from giving such a shock to their understandings as might break the charm which it was his object to throw over their imaginations. This is the real explanation of the indistinctness and inconsistency with which he has often been reproached. Dr. Johnson acknowledges that it was absolutely necessary that the spirits should be clothed with material forms. "But," says he, "the poet should have secured the consistency of his system by keeping immateriality out of sight, and seducing the reader to drop it from his thoughts?" This is easily said; but what if Milton could not seduce the reader to drop it from his thoughts? What if the contrary opinion had taken so full a possession of the minds of men as to leave no room even for the half belief which poetry requires? Such we suspect to have been the case. It was impossible for the poet to adopt altogether the material or the immaterial system. He therefore took his stand on the debatable ground: he left the whole in ambiguity. He has doubtless, by so doing, laid himself open to the charge of inconsistency; but,

though philosophically in the wrong, we cannot but believe that he was poetically in the right. This task, which almost any other writer would have found impracticable, was easy to him. The peculiar art which he possessed of communicating his meaning circuitously, through a long succession of associated ideas, and of intimating more than he expressed, enabled him to disguise those incongruities which he could not avoid.

40. Poetry which relates to the beings of another world ought to be at once mysterious and picturesque. That of Milton is so. That of Dante is picturesque indeed, beyond any that ever was written. Its effect approaches to that produced by the pencil or the chisel; but it is picturesque to the exclusion of all mystery. This is a fault, indeed, on the right side, a fault inseparable from the plan of his poem, which, as we have already observed, rendered the utmost accuracy of description necessary. Still, it is a fault. His supernatural agents excite an interest, but it is not the mysterious interest which is proper to supernatural agents. We feel that we could talk with his ghosts and dæmons,[1] without any emotion of unearthly awe. We could, like Don Juan,[2] ask them to supper, and eat heartily in their company. Dante's angels are good men with wings. His devils are spiteful, ugly executioners. His dead men are merely living men in strange situations. The scene which passes between the poet and Farinata[3] is justly celebrated. Still Farinata in the burning tomb is exactly what Farinata would have been at an

[1] Now spelled, demons.

[2] In Mozart's opera *Don Juan*, the hero invites to sup with him the statue of the dead *Commendatore* whom he had slain. A devil animates the statue; it accepts the invitation; a weird banquet is given, and in the midst of it the statue fetches away the sinful hero to hell.

[3] Farinata speaks to Dante from the interior of a burning tomb. *Inferno*, Canto X.

auto da fe.[1] Nothing can be more touching than the first interview of Dante and Beatrice.[2] Yet what is it but a lovely woman chiding, with sweet, austere composure, the lover for whose affection she is grateful, but whose vices she reprobates? The feelings which give the passage its charm would suit the streets of Florence as well as the summit of the Mount of Purgatory.

41. The spirits of Milton are unlike those of almost all other writers. His fiends, in particular, are wonderful creations. They are not metaphysical abstractions. They are not wicked men. They are not ugly beasts. They have no horns, no tails, none of the fee-faw-fum of Tasso[3] and Klopstock.[4] They have just enough in common with human nature to be intelligible to human beings. Their characters are, like their forms, marked by a certain dim resemblance to those of men, but exaggerated to gigantic dimensions, and veiled in mysterious gloom.

42. Perhaps the gods and dæmons of Æschylus may best bear a comparison with the angels and devils of Milton.[5]

[1] Literally "act of faith," a Portuguese phrase for a public act of punishment of heretics, *e.g.*, by burning them alive.

[2] Beatrice Portinari was a maiden of Florence whom Dante worshipped with a highly idealised poet's love. She died, a young girl, ten years before the writing of the *Divine Comedy*. She figures, however, in the poem as a visionary being who guides Dante through Paradise. This celestial creature symbolises the highest thoughts and aspirations of the poet himself. The poet's lower aims are called with the same symbolism his "lesser loves." For these "lesser loves" Beatrice chides him when she first meets him in the other world. See *Purgatorio*, Canto XXX.

[3] Tasso, a celebrated Italian epic poet (1544–1595). He wrote *Rinaldo* and *Jerusalem Delivered*.

[4] Klopstock, a German poet (1729–1803), wrote a poem called *The Messiah*. Both Tasso and Klopstock portray evil spirits in a somewhat crude fashion.

[5] Dæmon, a Greek word meaning a spirit. Here Macaulay uses it for those incorporeal creations of Æschylus, neither gods nor mor-

The style of the Athenian had, as we have remarked, something of the Oriental character; and the same peculiarity may be traced in his mythology. It has nothing of the amenity[1] and elegance which we generally find in the superstitions of Greece. All is rugged, barbaric, and colossal. His legends seem to harmonise less with the fragrant groves and graceful porticoes in which his countrymen paid their vows to the God of Light and Goddess of Desire, than with those huge and grotesque labyrinths of eternal granite, in which Egypt enshrined her mystic Osiris,[2] or in which Hindostan still bows down to her seven-headed idols.[3] His favourite gods are those of the elder generations—the sons of heaven and earth, compared with whom Jupiter himself was a stripling and an upstart —the gigantic Titans[4] and the inexorable Furies. Foremost among his creations of this class stands Prometheus,[5] half fiend, half redeemer, the friend of man, the sullen and implacable enemy of heaven. He bears undoubtedly a considerable resemblance to the Satan of Milton. In both we find the same impatience of control, the same ferocity,

tals, like the personages called "Force" and "Might," or the "Furies," or "Prometheus."

[1] Amenity, pleasing quality.

[2] Osiris, a chief god of Egypt, god of the dead in the after-life, a deity personifying the triumph of the human soul over death. He was worshipped with mystical ceremonies in the Egyptian funeral customs.

[3] In the Hindu mythology the gods symbolise their power by the number of their heads and limbs.

[4] The Titans, a mysterious group of deities in Greek mythology, considered to have preceded and to have been dethroned by the reigning deities of the Olympian dynasty.

[5] Prometheus, a Titan who befriended man against the purposes of Zeus by the gift of fire, stolen from heaven, which fire symbolises also the inventive intelligence. For this he was punished by Zeus by imprisonment in chains on a lonely rock where vultures tore him and ·n and cold beat on him without mercy.

the same unconquerable pride. In both characters also are mingled, though in very different proportions, some kind and generous feelings. Prometheus, however, is hardly superhuman enough. He talks too much of his chains and his uneasy posture: he is rather too much depressed and agitated. His resolution seems to depend on the knowledge which he possesses that he holds the fate of his torturer[1] in his hands, and that the hour of his release will surely come. But Satan is a creature of another sphere. The might of his intellectual nature is victorious over the extremity of pain. Amidst agonies which cannot be conceived without horror, he deliberates, resolves, and even exults. Against the sword of Michael,[2] against the thunder of Jehovah, against the flaming lake, and the marl burning with solid fire, against the prospect of an eternity of unintermittent misery, his spirit bears up unbroken, resting on its own innate energies, requiring no support from anything external, nor even from hope itself![3]

43. To return for a moment to the parallel which we have been attempting to draw between Milton and Dante, we would add, that the poetry of these great men has in a considerable degree taken its character from their moral qualities. They are not egotists.[4] They rarely obtrude

[1] The myth relates that Prometheus knew some secret ordinance of Fate, under which some one was to arise who should cast out Zeus from sovereign power in heaven and release Prometheus from punishment. Zeus sent the god Hermes, in the play, to extort the secret from Prometheus, but Prometheus refused to reveal what might enable his enemy Zeus to escape his doom.

[2] "Michael, of celestial armies prince," battles with Satan when he rebels against God in heaven. The story of the fearful contest is told to Adam by the angel Raphael in *Paradise Lost*, Book VI. Satan is beaten finally by the intervention of the Messiah armed with the thunders of Jehovah.

[3] See *Paradise Lost*, Book I.

[4] Egotist, one who is absorbed in himself.

their idiosyncracies [1] on their readers. They have nothing in common with those modern beggars for fame, who extort a pittance from the compassion of the inexperienced, by exposing the nakedness and sores of their minds. Yet it would be difficult to name two writers whose works have been more completely, though undesignedly, coloured by their personal feelings.

44. The character of Milton was peculiarly distinguished by loftiness of thought; that of Dante by intensity of feeling. In every line of the Divine Comedy we discern the asperity which is produced by pride struggling with misery. There is perhaps no work in the world so deeply and uniformly sorrowful. The melancholy of Dante was no fantastic caprice. It was not, as far as at this distance of time can be judged, the effect of external circumstances. It was from within. Neither love nor glory, neither the conflicts of earth, nor the hope of heaven, could dispel it. It turned every consolation and every pleasure into its own nature. It resembled that noxious Sardinian soil of which the intense bitterness is said to have been perceptible, even in its honey. His mind was, in the noble language of the Hebrew poet, "a land of darkness, as darkness itself, and where the light was as darkness!"[2] The gloom of his character discolours all the passions of men and all the face of nature, and tinges with its own livid hue the flowers of Paradise and the glories of the eternal throne! All the portraits of him are singularly characteristic. No person can look on the features, noble even to ruggedness, the dark furrows of the cheek, the haggard and woeful stare of the eye, the sullen and contemptuous curve of the lip, and doubt that they belong to a man too proud and too sensitive to be happy.[3]

[1] Idiosyncracy, special peculiarity of temper or constitution.

[2] *Job* x. 22.

[3] The most famous picture of Dante is that attributed to his

45. Milton[1] was, like Dante, a statesman and a lover—and, like Dante, he had been unfortunate in ambition and in love. He had survived his health and his sight, the comforts of his home, and the prosperity of his party. Of the great men by whom he had been distinguished at his entrance into life, some had been taken away from the evil to come; some had carried into foreign climates their unconquerable hatred of oppression; some were pining in dungeons; and some had poured forth their blood on scaffolds. Venal and licentious scribblers, with just sufficient talent to clothe the thoughts of a pandar in the style of a bellman,[2] were now the favourite writers of the sovereign and of the public. It was a loathsome herd—which could be compared to nothing so fitly as to the rabble of Comus, grotesque monsters, half bestial, half human, dropping with wine, bloated with gluttony, and reeling in obscene dances. Amidst these his Muse was placed, like the chaste lady of the Masque, lofty, spotless, and serene—to be chattered at, and pointed at, and grinned at, by the whole rabble of Satyrs and Goblins.[3] If ever despondency and asperity could be excused in any man, it might have been excused in Milton. But the strength of his mind overcame every calamity. Neither blindness, nor gout, nor age, nor penury, nor domestic afflictions, nor political disappointments, nor abuse, nor proscription, nor neglect, had power to disturb his sedate and majestic

contemporary, Giotto, a fresco on a wall in the Bargello at Florence.

[1] For Milton's story see the Introduction, 10–19. *Paradise Lost* was written chiefly, if not wholly, after the restoration of Charles II. to the throne in 1660.

[2] In the vociferous style of one who, like the old-fashioned bellman or town crier, forced the public to listen to what he said.

[3] Satyrs, in ancient classic myth, sylvan deities, becoming bestial in the fancies of the later ages. Goblins, knavish spirits of the mediæval legends haunting woods and dark places.

patience. His spirits do not seem to have been high, but they were singularly equable. His temper was serious, perhaps stern; but it was a temper which no sufferings could render sullen or fretful. Such as it was, when, on the eve of great events, he returned from his travels, in the prime of health and manly beauty, loaded with literary distinctions, and glowing with patriotic hopes, such it continued to be—when, after having experienced every calamity which is incident to our nature, old, poor, sightless, and disgraced, he retired to his hovel to die![1]

46. Hence it was, that, though he wrote the Paradise Lost at a time of life[2] when images of beauty and tenderness are in general beginning to fade, even from those minds in which they have not been effaced by anxiety and disappointment, he adorned it with all that is most lovely and delightful in the physical and in the moral world. Neither Theocritus[3] nor Ariosto[4] had a finer or more healthful sense of the pleasantness of external objects, or loved better to luxuriate amidst sunbeams and flowers, the songs of night-

[1] The contrasts in this paragraph are rather over-emphasized for rhetorical effect. The first period alluded to, the "eve of great events," is 1639. For the historical situation then, see Introduction, 8. His "domestic afflictions" were the want of harmony existing between his first wife and himself, the many deaths in his immediate family, and the unfilial conduct of his daughters. Milton died in 1674, not, however, in a "hovel," nor too poor to leave £1,500. Nor was he "disgraced." His last years, though poor, were not without comfort, happiness, and respect. See Introduction, 17.

[2] This poem was written in the years from 1658 to 1667. Milton would then be fifty to sixty years of age during its composition. He had planned it for many years before.

[3] Theocritus, the greatest and the first pastoral poet in the world, was a Sicilian Greek of the latter part of the third century B.C. Mr. Andrew Lang has made a beautiful English version of his idylls and poems describing country life and landscape.

[4] Ariosto, a great Italian poet (1474–1533), wrote *Orlando Furioso* and many lyric poems.

ingales, the juice of summer fruits, and the coolness of shady fountains. His conception of love unites all the voluptuousness of the Oriental harem, and all the gallantry of the chivalric tournament, with all the pure and quiet affection of an English fireside.[1] His poetry reminds us of the miracles of Alpine scenery. Nooks and dells, beautiful as fairy-land, are embosomed in its most rugged and gigantic elevations. The roses and myrtles bloom unchilled on the verge of the avalanche.

47. Traces indeed of the peculiar character of Milton may be found in all his works ; but it is most strongly displayed in the sonnets. Those remarkable poems have been undervalued by critics who have not understood their nature. They have no epigrammatic point. There is none of the ingenuity of Filicaja[2] in the thought, none of the hard and brilliant enamel of Petrarch in the style. They are simple but majestic records of the feelings of the poet ; as little tricked out for the public eye as his diary would have been. A victory, an expected attack upon the city, a momentary fit of depression or exultation, a jest thrown out against one of his books, a dream which for a short time restored to him that beautiful face[3] over which the grave had closed forever, led him to musings which, without effort, shaped themselves into verse. The unity of sentiment and severity of style which characterize these

§§ 47–49. *Sixth topic : The Sonnets.*

[1] Read Matthew Arnold's judgment on this sentence, in his Essay on Milton. See Suggestions for Teachers, iii., (1).

[2] Filicaja (1642–1707), an Italian poet and jurist, especially noted for his sonnets. Petrarch, the Italian scholar who is chiefly remembered for famous sonnets written in praise of his Laura.

[3] This refers to his second wife, Catherine Woodcock, who lived only fifteen months after their marriage. His dream of her is commemorated in *Sonnet XXIII.* Milton was totally blind before their marriage ; very possibly he never saw her face, and Macaulay had perhaps forgotten too that her face is veiled in the sonnet.

little pieces remind us of the Greek Anthology,[1] or perhaps still more of the Collects, of the English Liturgy. The noble poem on the massacres of Piedmont is strictly a collect in verse.[2]

48. The sonnets are more or less striking, according as the occasions which gave birth to them are more or less interesting. But they are, almost without exception, dignified by a sobriety and greatness of mind to which we know not where to look for a parallel.[3] It would indeed be scarcely safe to draw any decided inferences as to the character of a writer, from passages directly egotistical. But the qualities which we have ascribed to Milton, though perhaps most strongly marked in those parts of his works which treat of his personal feelings, are distinguishable in every page, and impart to all his writings, prose and poetry, English, Latin, and Italian, a strong family likeness.

49. His public conduct was such as was to be expected from a man of a spirit so high, and an intellect so powerful. He lived at one of the most memorable eras in the history of mankind, at the very crisis of the great conflict between Oromasdes and Arimanes,[4] liberty and despotism, reason and prejudice. That great battle was fought for no single generation, for no single land. The destinies of the human race were staked on the same cast with the freedom of the

[1] The Greek Anthology is a monster collection of short occasional poems, written through many centuries by many hands.

[2] *Sonnet XVIII.*

[3] Milton published twenty-three sonnets. Some of them are indeed the most beautiful sonnets in English, if not in the world. See Wordsworth's *Sonnet upon Milton.*

[4] In the Zoroastrian religion there are two deities, Ahurô Mazdaô and Angrô Mainyusha, called here Oromasdes and Arimanes. The first is creator of light, life, good ; the second, of darkness, filth, death. Both are eternal, and they are eternally contending for the mastery of the universe. For objections to this comparison of Macaulay's, see Matthew Arnold, *A French Critic on Milton.*

English people. Then were first proclaimed those mighty principles which have since worked their way into the depths of the American forests,[1] which have roused Greece from the slavery and degradation of two thousand years,[2] and which, from one end of Europe to the other, have kindled an unquenchable fire in the hearts of the oppressed, and loosed the knees of the oppressors with a strange and unwonted fear.

50. Of those principles, then struggling for their infant existence, Milton was the most devoted and eloquent literary champion. We need not say how much we admire his public conduct. But we cannot disguise from ourselves that a large portion of his countrymen still think it unjustifiable.[3] The civil war, indeed, has been more discussed, and is less understood, than any event in English history. The friends of liberty laboured under the disadvantage of which the lion in the fable[4] complained so bitterly.

[1] Macaulay has in his mind the recent setting up of the South American republics—Colombia (1819), Peru (1821), Mexico (1825), and others. They had been hitherto colonies of Spain.

[2] Greece had lost her independence by the conquest of the Romans, 146 B.C. She won it again, in 1829 A.D., from the Turks. The War of Grecian Independence (1821–1829) was going on while Macaulay was writing. For the movements of politics in Europe at the time when Macaulay wrote this essay, see Introduction, 8.

[3] The estimation in which Milton was held by Englishmen long depended on the critic's party politics. It still depended, in Macaulay's day, somewhat on the critic's political sympathies. As therefore Milton's public conduct is always judged from the party standpoint, Macaulay labors to justify the action of the whole Roundhead party, Milton included.

[4] The fable is this A man and a lion, travelling through a forest, and boasting of their strength and prowess, came to a statue of a man strangling a lion, on which the man remarked, "See how strong we are, and how we can prevail over even the king of beasts." To this the lion replied, "Yes, but if the lions knew how to erect statues, the man would have been under the lion's paw."

Though they were the conquerors, their enemies were the painters. As a body, the Roundheads[1] had done their utmost to decry and ruin literature; and literature was even with them, as, in the long run, it always is with its enemies. The best book on their side of the question is the charming narrative of Mrs. Hutchinson.[2] May's History of the Parliament[3] is good; but it breaks off at the most interesting crisis of the struggle. The performance of Ludlow is foolish and violent; and most of the later writers who have espoused the same cause, Oldmixon, for instance, and Catherine Macaulay, have, to say the least, been more distinguished by zeal than either by candour or by skill.[4] On the other side are the most authoritative and the most popular historical works in our language, that of Clarendon,[5] and that of Hume.[6] The former is not only ably written and full of valuable information, but has also an air of dignity and sincerity which makes even the prejudices and errors with which it abounds respectable. Hume, from whose fascinating narrative the great mass of the reading public are still contented to take their opinions, hated religion so much that he hated liberty for having been allied with

[1] Puritans, so called in contempt, because they did not wear their hair in long "love locks" like the Cavaliers.

[2] *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson by his Widow, Lucy.* It is published in Bohn's Standard Library. It has also been edited by C. H. Firth.

[3] *Breviary of the Parliament of England* by Thomas May, Esq., 1650.

[4] *Critical History of England*, John Oldmixon; *Memoirs of General Ludlow*, C. H. Firth; *History of England from the Accession of James I. to that of the House of Brunswick*, by Catherine Macaulay.

[5] *The History of the Rebellion, etc., begun in the year* 1641, *by Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon.* An edition by W. D. Macray is published in the Clarendon Press Series.

[6] *History of England from the Invasion of Julius Cæsar to the Revolution of* 1688, by David Hume.

religion, and has pleaded the cause of tyranny with the dexterity of an advocate, while affecting the impartiality of a judge.

51. The public conduct of Milton must be approved or condemned, according as the resistance of the people to Charles I. shall appear to be justifiable or criminal. We shall therefore make no apology for dedicating a few pages to the discussion of that interesting and most important question. We shall not argue it on general grounds. We shall not recur to those primary principles from which the claim of any government to the obedience of its subjects is to be deduced. We are entitled to that vantage-ground; but we will relinquish it. We are, on this point, so confident of superiority that we have no objection to imitate the ostentatious generosity of those ancient knights who vowed to joust[1] without helmet or shield against all enemies, and to give their antagonists the advantage of sun and wind. We will take the naked constitutional question. We confidently affirm that every reason which can be urged in favour of the Revolution of 1688 may be urged with at least equal force in favour of what is called the Great Rebellion.[2]

§§ 49–88. SECOND DIVISION OF THE ESSAY: MILTON'S CONDUCT AS A CITIZEN. THE CONDUCT OF HIS PARTY ASSOCIATES. §§ 49–72. *First topic: Milton's joining the party of the Parliament in* 1642. §§ 49–51. *Under the impressions derived from seventeenth and eighteenth century literature, many Englishmen fail to see that the Long Parliament was defending principles of government accepted by all England since* 1688, *and now struggling for recognition in the rest of the world.*

§§ 51–57. *The rebellion of Parliament against Charles I. is therefore justified by a comparison, point by point, with the glorious Revolution dethroning James II.*

[1] To take part in a military spectacle where knights attacked each other as if in warfare.

[2] For a brief review of all these events, see the Introduction, 13–16.

52. In one respect only, we think, can the warmest admirers of Charles venture to say that he was a better sovereign than his son. He was not, in name and profession, a Papist; we say in name and profession, because both Charles himself and his miserable creature Laud,[1] while they abjured the innocent badges of Popery, retained all its worst vices, a complete subjection of reason to authority, a weak preference of form to substance, a childish passion for mummeries, an idolatrous veneration for a priestly character, and, above all, a stupid and ferocious intolerance. This, however, we waive. We will concede that Charles was a good Protestant; but we say that his Protestantism does not make the slightest distinction between his case and that of James.

53. The principles of the Revolution have often been grossly misrepresented. There is a certain class of men[2] who, while they profess to hold in reverence the great names and great actions of former times, never look at them for any other purpose than in order to find in them some excuse for existing abuses. In every venerable precedent, they pass by what is essential, and take only what is accidental: they keep out of sight what is beneficial, and hold up to public imitation all that is defective. If, in any part of any great example, there be anything unsound, these flesh-flies detect it with an unerring instinct, and

[1] William Laud (1573–1645), the celebrated Archbishop of Canterbury, and one of the foremost statesmen in the King's party. For a more judicial estimate of him than Macaulay's, see his Life by Hutton, in the *Leaders of Religion Series* (Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1895).

[2] Macaulay is here attacking his own political enemies. He was of those who were trying at this time to relieve their Catholic fellow-citizens in Great Britain of all political disabilities. This was accomplished in 1829. Macaulay pauses here in the current of his essay to attack those hypocritical Protestants of his own day who pretended to cite the example of the great Whigs of 1688 to cover a bigoted hatred of Catholics in 1825. See Introduction, 8.

dart upon it with a ravenous delight. If some good end has been attained in spite of them, they feel, with their prototype, that

> "Their labour must be to pervert that end,
> And out of good still to find means of evil."[1]

54. To the blessings which England has derived from the Revolution, these people are utterly insensible. The expulsion of a tyrant, the solemn recognition of popular rights, liberty, security, toleration, all go for nothing with them. One sect[2] there was which, from unfortunate temporary causes, it was thought necessary to keep under close restraint. One part of the empire there was, so unhappily circumstanced that at that time its misery was necessary to our happiness, and its slavery to our freedom. These are the parts of the Revolution which the politicians of whom we speak love to contemplate, and which seem to them, not indeed to vindicate, but in some degree to palliate the good which it has produced. Talk to them of Naples, of Spain, or of South America. They stand forth, zealots for the doctrine of Divine Right which has now come back to us, like a thief from transportation, under the *alias* of Legitimacy.[3] But mention the miseries of Ireland. Then William[4] is a hero. Then Somers and Shrewsbury are great men.[5] Then the Revolution is a glorious era. The

[1] *Paradise Lost*, Book I., 164, 165.

[2] The Roman Catholics, especially in Ireland. See Introduction, 17.

[3] See Introduction, 8.

[4] William, Prince of Orange, afterwards William III. of England.

[5] John Somers (1652–1716) first became famous as counsel for the Seven Bishops; he took a leading part in framing the great Declaration of Right; under William he held high offices of state, especially those of Attorney General and Lord Chancellor. For his character see Macaulay's *History*, vol. vii., chap. xx. Charles, Earl of Shrewsbury (1660–1718), one of the seven Whigs who invited William to England; he afterwards helped to proclaim George I. His his-

very same persons who, in this country, never omit an opportunity of reviving every wretched Jacobite[1] slander respecting the Whigs of that period, have no sooner crossed St. George's Channel[2] than they begin to fill their bumpers to the glorious and immortal memory.[3] They may truly boast that they look not at men but at measures. So that evil be done, they care not who does it; the arbitrary Charles, or the liberal William, Ferdinand the Catholic, or Frederic the Protestant.[4] On such occasions their deadliest opponents may reckon upon their candid construction. The bold assertions of these people have of late impressed a large portion of the public with an opinion that James the Second was expelled simply because he was a Catholic, and that the Revolution was essentially a Protestant Revolution.

55. But this certainly was not the case. Nor can any person who has acquired more knowledge of the history of those times than is to be found in Goldsmith's Abridgment[5] believe that, if James had held his own religious opinions without wishing to make proselytes,[6] or if, wish-

tory is very curious and characteristic of the time. See Macaulay's *History*.

[1] Jacobite, a supporter of the Stuarts. Jacobus, Latin for James, would be the king's name in Latin documents and on the coins of James II.

[2] St. George's Channel separates England and Ireland.

[3] The traditional toast of the Whigs: "To the glorious and immortal memory of King William."

[4] Charles means, of course, the Stuart King. William is the Prince of Orange. But Macaulay means to taunt his own contemporaries, not only with their affected admiration for past heroes, but also for their actual sympathy with despots of the present. So the kings of Spain and of Prussia, named Ferdinand and Frederic, most unpopular in 1825 in England, must be alluded to here. See Introduction, 8.

[5] Oliver Goldsmith (1728–1774), author of the *Vicar of Wakefield*, wrote an abridged history of England.

[6] One who changes from one opinion or sect to another.

ing even to make proselytes, he had contented himself with exerting only his constitutional influence for that purpose, the Prince of Orange would ever have been invited over. Our ancestors, we suppose, knew their own meaning; and, if we may believe them, their hostility was primarily, not to popery, but to tyranny. They did not drive out a tyrant because he was a Catholic; but they excluded Catholics from the crown, because they thought them likely to be tyrants. The ground on which they, in their famous resolution, declared the throne vacant, was this, "that James had broken the fundamental laws of the kingdom."[1] Every man, therefore, who approves of the Revolution of 1688, must hold that the breach of fundamental laws on the part of the sovereign justifies resistance. The question then is this: Had Charles the First broken the fundamental laws of England?

56. No person can answer in the negative, unless he refuses credit, not merely to all the accusations brought against Charles by his opponents, but to the narratives of the warmest Royalists, and to the confessions of the King himself. If there be any truth in any historian of any party who has related the events of that reign, the conduct of Charles, from his accession to the meeting of the Long Parliament, had been a continued course of oppression and treachery.[2] Let those who applaud the Revolution and condemn the Rebellion, mention one act of James the Second to which a parallel is not to be found in the history of his father. Let them lay their fingers on a single article in

[1] Resolution of Parliament in 1689: "that King James, having endeavored to subvert the Constitution of this kingdom by breaking the original contract between King and People, and by the advice of Jesuits and other wicked persons, having violated the fundamental laws and having withdrawn himself out of the kingdom, has abdicated the government, and the throne is thereby vacant."

[2] See Introduction, 13.

the Declaration of Right,[1] presented by the two houses to William and Mary, which Charles is not acknowledged to have violated. He had, according to the testimony of his own friends, usurped the functions of the legislature, raised taxes without the consent of parliament, and quartered troops on the people in the most illegal and vexatious manner. Not a single session of parliament had passed without some unconstitutional attack on the freedom of debate. The right of petition was grossly violated; arbitrary judgments, exorbitant fines, and unwarranted imprisonments, were grievances of daily occurrence. If these things do not justify resistance, the Revolution was treason; if they do, the Great Rebellion was laudable.[2]

57. But, it is said, why not adopt milder measures? Why, after the king had consented to so many reforms, and renounced so many oppressive prerogatives,[3] did the parliament continue to rise in their demands at the risk of civil war? The ship money[4] had been given up. The Star Chamber[5] had been abolished. Provision had been made for the frequent convocation and secure deliberation of parliaments. Why not pursue an end confessedly good, by peaceable and regular means? We recur again to the

§§ 57–72. *Admitting, then, the justice of Parliament's quarrel with the king, was their rebellion too strong a measure? When are revolutions justified?*

[1] Declaration of Right presented by the two Houses to William and Mary, February, 1689, on the occasion of Parliament's declaring them to be King and Queen of England. See Introduction, 17.

[2] See Introduction, 13.

[3] Prerogatives, privileges sovereign and exclusive, subject to no restriction or interference, belonging specially to the king. See Introduction, 13.

[4] Ship money. See Introduction, 13.

[5] A peculiar court of Charles I. It had been developed from a sort of committee of the king's council, originating under the Tudor monarchy. See Introduction, 13.

analogy of the Revolution. Why was James driven from the throne? Why was he not retained upon conditions? He, too, had offered to call a free parliament, and to submit to its decision all the matters in dispute. Yet we are in the habit of praising our forefathers, who preferred a revolution, a disputed succession, a dynasty of strangers, twenty years of foreign and intestine war, a standing army, and a national debt, to the rule, however restricted, of a tried and proved tyrant.[1] The Long Parliament acted on the same principle, and is entitled to the same praise. They could not trust the king. He had, no doubt, passed salutary laws. But what assurance had they that he would not break them? He had renounced oppressive prerogatives. But where was the security that he would not resume them? They had to deal with a man whom no tie could bind, a man who made and broke promises with equal facility, a man whose honor had been a hundred times pawned, and never redeemed.

58. Here, indeed, the Long Parliament stands on still stronger ground than the Convention of 1688. No action of James can be compared, for wickedness and impudence, to the conduct of Charles with respect to the Petition of Right.[2] The Lords and Commons present him with a bill in which the constitutional limits of his power are marked out. He hesitates; he evades; at last he bargains to give his assent

[1] See Introduction, 17. In fact from 1668 to 1748 the disputes over the English succession were incessant. It involved England in quarrels with the French King, and furnished pretexts for constant quarrels at home. As to the dynasty, William was a stranger in England to the end of his life, and the first two Georges never spoke English well, and preferred Hanover as a residence. The national debt was created by Montague's borrowing on bonds at 10 per cent. for the expenses of William's government in 1692. It may therefore be said to be due to the Revolution.

[2] Presented in 1628 to Charles I. by his third parliament. It forbade taxation without consent of a parliament. See Introduction, 13.

for five subsidies. The bill receives his solemn assent. The subsidies are voted. But no sooner is the tyrant relieved, than he returns at once to all the arbitrary measures which he had bound himself to abandon, and violates all the clauses of the very Act which he had been paid to pass.

59. For more than ten years the people had seen the rights, which were theirs by a double claim, by immemorial inheritance and by recent purchase, infringed by the perfidious king who had recognized them. At length circumstances compelled Charles to summon another parliament: another chance was given to our fathers: were they to throw it away as they had thrown away the former? Were they again to be cozened by *le Roi le veut?*[1] Were they again to advance their money on pledges which had been forfeited over and over again? Were they to lay a second petition of right at the foot of the throne, to grant another lavish aid in exchange for another unmeaning ceremony, and then to take their departure, till, after ten years more of fraud and oppression, their prince should again require a supply, and again repay it with a perjury? They were compelled to choose whether they would trust a tyrant or conquer him. We think that they chose wisely and nobly.

60. The advocates of Charles, like the advocates of other malefactors against whom overwhelming evidence is produced, generally decline all controversy about the facts, and content themselves with calling testimony to character. He had so many private virtues! And had James the Second no private virtues? Was even Oliver Cromwell,[2] his

[1] "The king wills it." This is the form of consent by which an Act of Parliament is accepted by the monarch and made law at the present day. It comes down from the time when French was the language of the Kings of England.

[2] The character of Oliver Cromwell is not even yet properly estimated. Since Macaulay wrote, however, the drift of opinion has grown

bitterest enemies themselves being judges, destitute of private virtues? And what, after all, are the virtues ascribed to Charles? A religious zeal, not more sincere than that of his son, and fully as weak and narrow-minded, and a few of the ordinary household decencies which half the tombstones in England claim for those who lie beneath them. A good father! A good husband! Ample apologies indeed for fifteen years of persecution, tyranny, and falsehood.

61. We charge him with having broken his coronation oath; and we are told that he kept his marriage vow! We accuse him of having given up his people to the merciless inflictions of the most hot-headed and hard-hearted of prelates; and the defence is, that he took his little son on his knee and kissed him! We censure him for having violated the articles of the Petition of Right, after having, for good and valuable consideration, promised to observe them; and we are informed, that he was accustomed to hear prayers at six o'clock in the morning! It is to such considerations as these, together with his Vandyke[1] dress, his handsome face, and his peaked beard, that he owes, we verily believe, most of his popularity with the present generation.

more and more favorable even among those who may consider themselves his political opponents. The curious may read Carlyle's great *Life of Cromwell* and Gardiner's recently published volumes on the Commonwealth in his great series on the history of England. See, for a good short history, Frederic Harrison's *Oliver Cromwell* (Macmillan, 1888).

[1] Named from Anthony Van Dyck (1599–1641), the great Flemish portrait-painter. He was knighted and made court painter by Charles I., who sat to him many times. King Charles may be said to be known to posterity exclusively by these pictures, which "once seen are impossible to forget." He painted also a famous picture of the children of Charles I. The beautiful "Vandyke dress" appears in most of these portraits; it is specially characterized by the collar and trimmings of lace.

62. For ourselves, we own that we do not understand the common phrase, a good man but a bad king. We can as easily conceive a good man and an unnatural father, or a good man and a treacherous friend. We cannot, in estimating the character of an individual, leave out of our consideration his conduct in the most important of all human relations. And if, in that relation, we find him to have been selfish, cruel, and deceitful, we shall take the liberty to call him a bad man, in spite of all his temperance at table, and all his regularity at chapel.

63. We cannot refrain from adding a few words respecting a topic on which the defenders of Charles are fond of dwelling. If, they say, he governed his people ill, he at least governed them after the example of his predecessors. If he violated their privileges, it was because those privileges had not been accurately defined. No act of oppression has ever been imputed to him, which has not a parallel in the annals of the Tudors.[1] This point Hume has laboured, with an art which is as discreditable in a historical work as it would be admirable in a forensic address. The answer is short, clear, and decisive. Charles had assented to the Petition of Right. He had renounced the oppressive powers said to have been exercised by his predecessors, and he had renounced them for money. He was not entitled to set up his antiquated claims against his own recent release.

64. These arguments are so obvious that it may seem superfluous to dwell upon them. But those who have observed how much the events of that time are misrepresented and misunderstood will not blame us for stating the case simply. It is a case of which the simplest statement is the strongest.

[1] The house of Tudor (Henry VII., Henry VIII., Edward VI., Mary and Elizabeth) was named from Owen Tudor, Earl of Richmond, father of Henry VII.

65. The enemies of the Parliament, indeed, rarely choose to take issue on the great points of the question. They content themselves with exposing some of the crimes and follies to which public commotions necessarily give birth. They bewail the unmerited fate of Strafford.[1] They execrate the lawless violence of the army. They laugh at the Scriptural names of the preachers.[2] Major-generals fleecing their districts; soldiers revelling on the spoils of a ruined peasantry; upstarts, enriched by the public plunder, taking possession of the hospitable firesides and hereditary trees of the old gentry; boys smashing the beautiful windows of cathedrals; Quakers[3] riding naked through the market-place; Fifth-monarchy-men shouting for King Jesus[4]; agitators lecturing from the tops of tubs on the fate of Agag[5]—all these, they tell us, were the offspring of the Great Rebellion.

66. Be it so. We are not careful to answer in this matter. These charges, were they infinitely more important, would not alter our opinion of an event which alone has made us

[1] Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, the adviser of Charles I. See Introduction, 13. He was "attainted," that is condemned to death for high treason by a bill in Parliament, instead of by regular legal proceedings before a court, and executed in 1641.

[2] For the Puritan and his ways, see Macaulay, *History of England*, vol. i., chap. 1.

[3] George Fox first preached "the breaking forth of God's power" in 1648. His disciples were identified with many extravagances of the time, some of them making violent appeals to the emotions of the multitude. The extraordinary excesses here alluded to were intended by these Quaker prophets as an imitation of the symbolical actions of the Prophet Isaiah. *Isaiah* xx. 2. The "Quakers" had no regular organization as a sect before 1666.

[4] Fifth-monarchy-men (1657), believing in the immediate coming of Christ, and also that it was their duty to inaugurate his kingdom by force. The other four monarchies alluded to were Assyria, Persia, Greece, Rome.

[5] 1 *Samuel* xv 32.

to differ from the slaves who crouch beneath despotic sceptres.[1] Many evils, no doubt, were produced by the civil war. They were the price of our liberty. Has the acquisition been worth the sacrifice? It is the nature of the Devil of tyranny to tear and rend the body which he leaves. Are the miseries of continued possession less horrible than the struggles of the tremendous exorcism?[2]

67. If it were possible that a people brought up under an intolerant and arbitrary system could subvert that system without acts of cruelty and folly, half the objections to despotic power would be removed. We should, in that case, be compelled to acknowledge that it at least produces no pernicious effects on the intellectual and moral character of a people. We deplore the outrages which accompany revolutions. But the more violent the outrages, the more assured we feel that a revolution was necessary. The violence of those outrages will always be proportioned to the ferocity and ignorance of the people; and the ferocity and ignorance of the people will be proportioned to the oppression and degradation under which they have been accustomed to live. Thus it was in our civil war. The heads of the church and state reaped only that which they had sown. The government had prohibited free discussion: it had done its best to keep the people unacquainted with their duties and their rights. The retribution was just and natural. If our rulers suffered from popular ignorance, it was because they had themselves taken away the key of knowledge. If they were assailed with blind fury, it was because they had exacted an equally blind submission.

[1] In the first publication of this essay Macaulay wrote "the sceptres of Brandenburgh and Braganza," *i.e.*, Prussia and Portugal, referring especially to the "despots" of his own day, as above noted.

[2] The process of expelling evil spirits by religious or magical ceremonies.

68. It is the character of such revolutions that we always see the worst of them at first. Till men have been for some time free, they know not how to use their freedom. The natives of wine countries are always sober. In climates where wine is a rarity, intemperance abounds. A newly liberated people may be compared to a northern army encamped on the Rhine or the Xeres.[1] It is said that, when soldiers in such a situation first find themselves able to indulge without restraint in such a rare and expensive luxury, nothing is to be seen but intoxication. Soon, however, plenty teaches discretion; and after wine has been for a few months their daily fare, they become more temperate than they had ever been in their own country. In the same manner, the final and permanent fruits of liberty are wisdom, moderation, and mercy. Its immediate effects are often atrocious crimes, conflicting errors, scepticism on points the most clear, dogmatism on points the most mysterious. It is just at this crisis that its enemies love to exhibit it. They pull down the scaffolding from the half-finished edifice: they point to the flying dust, the falling bricks, the comfortless rooms, the frightful irregularity of the whole appearance; and then ask in scorn where the promised splendour and comfort is to be found. If such miserable sophisms[2] were to prevail, there would never be a good house or a good government in the world.

69. Ariosto tells a pretty story of a fairy,[3] who, by some mysterious law of her nature, was condemned to appear, at certain seasons, in the form of a foul and poisonous snake. Those who injured her during the period of her disguise

[1] The Rhine country in Germany is full of vineyards where Hock and Moselle wines are made. Xeres, or Jerez de la Frontera, is not a river but a town in Andalusia, near Cadiz, in Spain, where Sherry wine was first made and named.

[2] A false argument devised to show ingenuity or to deceive.

[3] See *Orlando Furioso*, Canto XLIII.

were for ever excluded from participation in the blessings which she bestowed. But to those who, in spite of her loathsome aspect, pitied and protected her, she afterwards revealed herself in the beautiful and celestial form which was natural to her, accompanied their steps, granted all their wishes, filled their houses with wealth, made them happy in love and victorious in war. Such a spirit is Liberty. At times she takes the form of a hateful reptile. She grovels, she hisses, she stings. But woe to those who in disgust shall venture to crush her! And happy are those who, having dared to receive her in her degraded and frightful shape, shall at length be rewarded by her in the time of her beauty and her glory!

70. There is only one cure for the evils which newly acquired freedom produces, and that cure is freedom. When a prisoner first leaves his cell, he cannot bear the light of day: he is unable to discriminate colours or to recognize faces. But the remedy is, not to remand him into his dungeon, but to accustom him to the rays of the sun. The blaze of truth and liberty may at first dazzle and bewilder nations which have become half blind in the house of bondage. But let them gaze on, and they will soon be able to bear it. In a few years men learn to reason. The extreme violence of opinions subsides. Hostile theories correct each other. The scattered elements of truth cease to conflict, and begin to coalesce. And at length a system of justice and order is educed out of the chaos.

71. Many politicians of our time are in the habit of laying it down as a self-evident proposition that no people ought to be free till they are fit to use their freedom. The maxim is worthy of the fool in the old story who resolved not to go into the water till he had learnt to swim. If men are to wait for liberty till they become wise and good in slavery, they may indeed wait for ever.

72. Therefore it is that we decidedly approve of the conduct of Milton and the other wise and good men who, in spite of much that was ridiculous and hateful in the conduct of their associates, stood firmly by the cause of Public Liberty. We are not aware that the poet has been charged with personal participation in any of the blameable excesses of that time. The favourite topic of his enemies is the line of conduct which he pursued with regard to the execution of the King. Of that celebrated proceeding we by no means approve. Still we must say, in justice to the many eminent persons who concurred in it, and in justice more particularly to the eminent person who defended it, that nothing can be more absurd than the imputations which, for the last hundred and sixty years, it has been the fashion to cast upon the Regicides.[1] We have throughout abstained from appealing to first principles. We will not appeal to them now. We recur again to the parallel case of the Revolution. What essential distinction can be drawn between the execution of the father and the deposition of the son? What constitutional maxim is there which applies to the former and not to the latter? The king can do no wrong. If so, James was as innocent as Charles could have been. The minister only ought to be responsible for the acts of the Sovereign. If so, why not impeach Jeffreys[2] and retain James? The person of a King is sacred. Was the person of James considered

§§ 72–78. *Second topic: Milton's association with the Regicides and Cromwell.* §§ 72–75. *The execution of Charles not so very different a measure from the deposition of James. But even if one disapproves of the regicide, one may admit the necessity of defending it at that time.*

[1] Commonly, the members of the High Court of Justice, who sentenced Charles I. Also, as an abstract noun in the singular, regicide is the act of killing a king.

[2] The wicked Chief Justice (1648–1689), minister, and adviser of James II., notorious for flagrant injustice and brutality on the bench See Macaulay's *History*, Vols. II., III.

sacred at the Boyne?[1] To discharge cannon against an army in which a King is known to be posted, is to approach pretty near to regicide. Charles, too, it should always be remembered, was put to death by men who had been exasperated by the hostilities of several years, and who had never been bound to him by any other tie than that which was common to them with all their fellow-citizens. Those who drove James from his throne, who seduced his army, who alienated his friends, who first imprisoned him in his palace, and then turned him out of it, who broke in upon his various slumbers by imperious messages, who pursued him with fire and sword from one part of the empire to another, who hanged, drew, and quartered his adherents, and attainted his innocent heir, were his nephew and his two daughters![2] When we reflect on all these things, we are at a loss to conceive how the same persons who, on the fifth of November,[3] thank God for wonderfully conducting

[1] The battle of the Boyne, a river in the north of Ireland, fought July 1st, 1690, between the Dutch and English troops, under King William, and the English, French, and Irish, under King James See Gardiner's *Student's History of England.*

[2] William, Prince of Orange, who headed the attack on the King, was the son of Mary, sister of James II., and thus his nephew. Mary, William's wife, and Anne, his successor, were daughters of James II. by Anne Hyde. The "innocent heir" of James II. was his son by Mary of Este, his wife. This heir, after James's death, was called James III. by the Jacobites, and the "Old Pretender" by the partisans of the House of Hanover.

[3] The English Prayer Book, when Macaulay wrote, contained a "Form of Prayer and Thanksgiving" for use on November fifth, celebrating the delivery of England from "Popish Tyranny and Arbitrary Power." It was the anniversary of the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot and also of the arrival of William in England. The thirtieth day of January was kept as a "Day of Prayer and Fasting for the Martyrdom of the Blessed King Charles the First." Both these services were taken out of the Prayer Book by Royal Warrant of Queen Victoria in 1859. From these services Macaulay is quoting.

his servant, William, and for making all opposition fall before him until he became our King and Governor, can on the thirtieth of January, contrive to be afraid that the blood of the Royal Martyr may be visited on themselves and their children.

73. We disapprove, we repeat, of the execution of Charles; not because the constitution exempts the King from responsibility, for we know that all such maxims, however excellent, have their exceptions; nor because we feel any peculiar interest in his character, for we think that his sentence describes him with perfect justice as "a tyrant, a traitor, a murderer, and a public enemy;" but because we are convinced that the measure was most injurious to the cause of freedom. He whom it removed was a captive and a hostage: his heir, to whom the allegiance of every Royalist was instantly transferred, was at large. The Presbyterians[1] could never have been perfectly reconciled to the father: they had no such rooted enmity to the son. The great body of the people, also, contemplated that proceeding with feelings which, however unreasonable, no government could safely venture to outrage.

74. But, though we think the conduct of the Regicides blameable, that of Milton appears to us in a very different light. The deed was done. It could not be undone. The evil was incurred; and the object was to render it as small as possible. We censure the chiefs of the army for not yielding to the popular opinion; but we cannot censure Milton for wishing to change that opinion. The very feeling which would have restrained us from committing the act would have led us, after it had been committed, to de-

[1] Those who desired to introduce into England church government by bodies of Elders or Presbyters instead of by Bishops. After Charles's death this party did support Charles II., as they feared and disliked the religious theories of the Independents of the Army more than they feared royal tyranny.

fend it against the ravings of servility and superstition. For the sake of public liberty, we wish that the thing had not been done, while the people disapproved of it. But, for the sake of public liberty, we should also have wished the people to approve of it when it was done. If anything more were wanting to the justification of Milton, the book of Salmasius[1] would furnish it. That miserable performance is now with justice considered only as a beacon to word-catchers who wish to become statesmen. The celebrity of the man who refuted it, the "Æneæ magni dextra,"[2] gives it all its fame with the present generation. In that age the state of things was different. It was not then fully understood how vast an interval separates the mere classical scholar from the political philosopher. Nor can it be doubted that a treatise which, bearing the name of so eminent a critic, attacked the fundamental principles of all free governments, must, if suffered to remain unanswered, have produced a most pernicious effect on the public mind.

75. We wish to add a few words relative to another subject on which the enemies of Milton delight to dwell, his conduct during the administration of the Protector.[3] That an enthusiastic votary of liberty should accept office under a military usurper seems, no doubt, at first sight, extraordinary. But all the circumstances in which the

§§ 75–78. *Discussion of Cromwell's good government compared with Parliament's betrayal of trust on one side and Stuart misgovernment on the other.*

[1] Claudius Salmasius (1588–1653), the most famous scholar of Milton's day, professor at the University of Leyden. For this pamphlet controversy over the execution of Charles between Milton and Salmasius, see the Introduction, 16.

[2] "Thou fallest by the right hand of great Æneas," a line from Virgil's *Æneid* (X., 830). This now proverbial phrase describes the death of a person wholly unknown falling by the sword of a great hero.

[3] For the Protectorate, see the Introduction, 16.

country was then placed were extraordinary. The ambition of Oliver was of no vulgar kind. He never seems to have coveted despotic power. He at first fought sincerely and manfully for the Parliament, and never deserted it, till it had deserted its duty. If he dissolved it by force, it was not till he found that the few members who remained after so many deaths, secessions, and expulsions, were desirous to appropriate to themselves a power which they held only in trust, and to inflict upon England the curse of a Venetian oligarchy.[1] But even when thus placed by violence at the head of affairs, he did not assume unlimited power. He gave the country a constitution far more perfect than any which had at that time been known in the world.[2] He reformed the representative system in a manner that has extorted praise even from Lord Clarendon. For himself he demanded indeed the first place in the commonwealth; but with powers scarcely so great as those of a Dutch stadtholder,[3] or an American President. He gave the Parliament a voice in the appointment of ministers, and left to it the whole legislative authority—not even reserving to himself a veto on its enactments; and he did not require that the chief magistracy should be hereditary in his family. Thus far, we think, if the circumstances of the time, and the opportunities which he had of aggrandising

[1] "Not a dog barked at their going," said Cromwell afterwards. An oligarchy is the government of a state by a few of its citizens. Venice was always called a republic, because it was not governed by one king or other monarch. But its government shrunk slowly from government by general meetings of citizens into an oligarchy governed by Councils (Great Council, Small Council. Council of Ten), and at last supreme power fell into the hands of only Three.

[2] The "Instrument of Government," the first and last time England ever had a written constitution. See the Introduction, 16.

[3] The chief magistrate of the Dutch Republic. The word "stathouder" originally meant "governor of a province," "stead-holder," or lieutenant. But it came to mean the chief magistrate of the United Provinces.

himself, be fairly considered, he will not lose by comparison with Washington or Bolivar.[1] Had his moderation been met by corresponding moderation, there is no reason to think that he would have overstepped the line which he had traced for himself. But when he found that his parliaments questioned the authority under which they met, and that he was in danger of being deprived of the restricted power which was absolutely necessary to his personal safety, then, it must be acknowledged, he adopted a more arbitrary policy.

76. Yet, though we believe that the intentions of Cromwell were at first honest, though we believe that he was driven from the noble course which he had marked out for himself, by the almost irresistible force of circumstances; though we admire, in common with all men of all parties, the ability and energy of his splendid administration, we are not pleading for arbitrary and lawless power, even in his hands. We know that a good constitution is infinitely better than the best despot. But we suspect that, at the time of which we speak, the violence of religious and political enmities rendered a stable and happy settlement next to impossible. The choice lay, not between Cromwell and liberty, but between Cromwell and the Stuarts.[2] That Milton chose well, no man can doubt who fairly compares the events of the protectorate with those of the thirty years which succeeded it,[3] the darkest and

[1] Bolivar (1783–1830), the "Liberator," who emancipated the colonies of Spain, and created the great republic of Bolivia in South America, which, however, fell to pieces after his death into several states. He was a popular hero to young Liberals of this time. See Introduction, 8.

[2] The Stuarts, James I., Charles I., Charles II., James II., sat on the English throne from 1603–1688. For their general history, see Macaulay's *History of England.*

[3] 1660–1688, the reigns of Charles II. and James II., often called the "Restoration."

most disgraceful in the English annals. Cromwell was evidently laying, though in an irregular manner, the foundations of an admirable system. Never before had religious liberty and freedom of discussion been enjoyed in a greater degree. Never had the national honour been better upheld abroad, or the seat of justice better filled at home. And it was rarely that any opposition, which stopped short of open rebellion, provoked the resentment of the liberal and magnanimous usurper. The institutions which he had established, as set down in the Instrument of Government, and the Humble Petition and Advice,[1] were excellent. His practice, it is true, too often departed from the theory of these institutions. But, had he lived a few years longer, it is probable that his institutions would have survived him, and that his arbitrary practice would have died with him. His power had not been consecrated by ancient prejudices. It was upheld only by his great personal qualities. Little, therefore, was to be dreaded from a second protector, unless he were also a second Oliver Cromwell. The events which followed his decease are the most complete vindication of those who exerted themselves to uphold his authority. His death dissolved the whole frame of society. The army rose against the parliament, the different corps of the army against each other. Sect raved against sect. Party plotted against party. The Presbyterians, in their eagerness to be revenged on the Independents,[2] sacrificed their own liberty, and deserted all their old principles. Without casting one glance on the past, or requiring one stipula-

[1] See Introduction, 16.

[2] The Independents were distinguished from the Presbyterians in that they desired no general church government in the nation, but that each congregation of worshippers should be independent of every other.

tion for the future, they threw down their freedom at the feet of the most frivolous and heartless of tyrants.[1]

77. Then came those days, never to be recalled without a blush, the days of servitude without loyalty, and sensuality without love, of dwarfish talents and gigantic vices, the paradise of cold hearts and narrow minds, the golden age of the coward, the bigot, and the slave. The King cringed to his rival[2] that he might trample on his people, sank into a viceroy of France, and pocketed, with complacent infamy, her degrading insults and her more degrading gold. The caresses of harlots, and the jests of buffoons, regulated the policy of the state. The government had just ability enough to deceive, and just religion enough to persecute. The principles of liberty were the scoff of every grinning courtier, and the Anathema Maranatha[3] of every fawning dean.[4] In every high place, worship was paid to Charles and James, Belial and Moloch,[5] and England propitiated those obscene and cruel idols with

[1] But Charles II. was not known to be a "frivolous and heartless tyrant." He was only thirty years old at that time, and might be supposed to have learned something from his father's fate. This part of the essay, as well as the next few paragraphs, is rather too strongly stated by Macaulay. Read Matthew Arnold, *A French Critic on Milton*.

[2] Louis XIV. of France.

[3] 1 *Corinthians* xvi. 22. Anathĕma, anything devoted to evil, "an accursed thing." Maranātha, "The Lord hath come," means only "Amen!"

[4] A dean in England is the head of the corporation of a Cathedral. The place is very honorable and has been held by the best of the English clergy. The word is used here by Macaulay to stand for the upper clergy in general of these reigns.

[5] The allusion here is to the two fiends in *Paradise Lost;* Belial (Book II., verse 108), the graceful and humane but false and hollow angel, is of course Charles II.; Moloch (Book II., verse 43), the cruel, is King James II.

the blood of her best and bravest children. Crime succeeded to crime, and disgrace to disgrace, till the race accursed of God and man was a second time driven forth, to wander on the face of the earth, and to be a by-word and a shaking of the head to the nations.

78. Most of the remarks which we have hitherto made on the public character of Milton apply to him only as one of a large body. We shall proceed to notice some of the peculiarities which distinguished him from his contemporaries. And, for that purpose, it is necessary to take a short survey of the parties into which the political world was at that time divided. We must premise that our observations are intended to apply only to those who adhered, from a sincere preference, to one or to the other side. At a period of public commotion, every faction, like an Oriental army, is attended by a crowd of camp-followers, a useless and heartless rabble, who prowl round its line of march in the hope of picking up something under its protection, but desert it in the day of battle, and often join to exterminate it after a defeat. England, at the time of which we are treating, abounded with such fickle and selfish politicians, who transferred their support to every government as it rose, who kissed the hand of the king in 1640,[1] and spat in his face in 1649, who shouted with equal glee when

§§ 78–87. *Third topic: Milton's contemporaries classified and described.* §§ 79–84. *The Puritans.*

[1] The Long Parliament assembled in 1640; the king was executed in 1649. Cromwell was inaugurated "Lord Protector" in 1653; his body was disinterred and treated with indignity in 1661. Calves' heads were set on the table by the fiercer rebels to commemorate the beheading of the king. In the festivities celebrating the return of Charles II. in 1660 broiled rumps were cooked and eaten in the streets of London to ridicule the "rump" Parliament. In the flight of Charles II., after his defeat at Worcester, he was said to have found a hiding-place in an oak tree. The oak was the Royalist symbol thereafter.

Cromwell was inaugurated in Westminster Hall, and when he was dug up to be hanged at Tyburn; who dined on calves' heads or on broiled rumps, and cut down oak-branches or stuck them up, as circumstances altered, without the slightest shame or repugnance. These we leave out of the account. We take our estimate of parties from those who really deserved to be called partisans.

79. We would speak first of the Puritans, the most remarkable body of men, perhaps, which the world has ever produced. The odious and ridiculous parts of their character lie on the surface. He that runs may read them; nor have there been wanting attentive and malicious observers to point them out. For many years after the Restoration, they were the theme of unmeasured invective and derision. They were exposed to the utmost licentiousness of the press and the stage, at the time when the press and stage were most licentious. They were not men of letters; they were as a body unpopular; they could not defend themselves; and the public would not take them under its protection. They were therefore abandoned, without reserve, to the tender mercies of the satirists and dramatists.[1] The ostentatious simplicity of their dress, their sour aspect, their nasal twang, their stiff posture, their long graces, their Hebrew names, the Scriptural phrases, which they introduced on every occasion, their contempt of human learning, their detestation of polite amusements, were indeed fair game for the laughers. But it is not from the laughers alone that the philosophy of history is to be learnt. And he who approaches this subject should carefully guard against the influence of that potent ridicule which has already misled so many excellent writers.[2]

[1] For example, Butler's *Hudibras*.

[2] Such as Scott's *Woodstock* and *Peveril of the Peak*, which are a good deal affected by this view of the Puritans. Scott represents the current opinion of Macaulay's Tory contemporaries.

"Ecco il fonte del riso, ed ecco il rio
Che mortali perigli in se contiene:
Hor qui tener a fren nostro desio,
Ed esser cauti molto a noi conviene." [1]

80. Those who roused the people to resistance, who directed their measures through a long series of eventful years, who formed, out of the most unpromising materials, the finest army that Europe had ever seen, who trampled down King, Church, and Aristocracy, who, in the short intervals of domestic sedition and rebellion, made the name of England terrible to every nation on the face of the earth, were no vulgar fanatics.[2] Most of their absurdities were mere external badges, like the signs of freemasonry, or the dresses of friars. We regret that these badges were not more attractive. We regret that a body, to whose courage and talents mankind has owed inestimable obligations, had not the lofty elegance which distinguished some of the adherents of Charles the First, or the easy good-breeding for which the court of Charles the Second was celebrated. But, if we must make our choice, we shall, like Bassanio in the play, turn from the specious caskets, which contain only the Death's head and the Fool's head, and fix our choice on the plain leaden chest which conceals the treasure.[3]

[1] "This is the source of laughter and this the stream
Which contains mortal perils in itself:
Now here to hold in check our desire,
And to be very cautious, becomes us."

See Tasso, *Jerusalem Delivered*, XV., 57ff. In the island of the witch Armida, two knights find the river of Laughter. Their guide warns them in these words.

[2] Oliver Cromwell's strong policy made England a menace to her opponents and a power of the first rank on the Continent, whereas under Charles II. and James II. she dropped into a second-rate power.

[3] The well-known story in the *Merchant of Venice*.

81. The Puritans were men whose minds had derived a peculiar character from the daily contemplation of superior beings and eternal interests. Not content with acknowledging, in general terms, an overruling Providence, they habitually ascribed every event to the will of the Great Being, for whose power nothing was too vast, for whose inspection nothing was too minute. To know him, to serve him, to enjoy him, was with them the great end of existence.[1] They rejected with contempt the ceremonious homage which other sects substituted for the pure worship of the soul. Instead of catching occasional glimpses of the Deity through an obscuring veil, they aspired to gaze full on the intolerable brightness, and to commune with him face to face. Hence originated their contempt for terrestrial distinctions. The difference between the greatest and meanest of mankind seemed to vanish, when compared with the boundless interval which separated the whole race from him on whom their own eyes were constantly fixed. They recognized no title to superiority but his favour; and, confident of that favour, they despised all the accomplishments and all the dignities of the world. If they were unacquainted with the works of philosophers and poets, they were deeply read in the oracles of God. If their names were not found in the registers of heralds, they felt assured that they were recorded in the Book of Life. If their steps were not accompanied by a splendid train of menials, legions of ministering angels had charge over them. Their palaces were houses not made with hands; their diadems, crowns of glory which shall never fade away. On the rich and the eloquent, on nobles and priests, they looked down with contempt: for they esteemed themselves rich in a more precious treasure, and

[1] An allusion to the first question and answer in the Westminster Catechism: "What is the chief end of man? To glorify God and to enjoy him forever."

eloquent in a more sublime language, nobles by the right of an earlier creation, and priests by the imposition of a mightier hand. The very meanest of them was a being to whose fate a mysterious and terrible importance belonged, on whose slightest action the spirits of light and darkness looked with anxious interest, who had been destined, before heaven and earth were created, to enjoy a felicity which should continue when heaven and earth should have passed away. Events which short-sighted politicians ascribed to earthly causes, had been ordained on his account. For his sake empires had risen, and flourished, and decayed. For his sake the Almighty had proclaimed his will by the pen of the Evangelist, and the harp of the prophet.[1] He had been wrested by no common deliverer from the grasp of no common foe. He had been ransomed by the sweat of no vulgar agony, by the blood of no earthly sacrifice. It was for him that the sun had been darkened, that the rocks had been rent, that the dead had arisen, that all nature had shuddered at the sufferings of her expiring God.

82. Thus the Puritan was made up of two different men, the one all self-abasement, penitence, gratitude, passion; the other proud, calm, inflexible, sagacious. He prostrated himself in the dust before his Maker; but he set his foot on the neck of his king. In his devotional retirement, he prayed with convulsions, and groans, and tears.[2] He was half-maddened by glorious or terrible illusions. He heard the lyres of angels, or the tempting whispers of fiends. He

[1] Evangelists are supposed to write, as historians, with pens; but according to classic tradition, oracles and prophets are supposed to speak in song, to musical accompaniment. The Psalms and the Prophecy of the Hebrew Scriptures are of the nature of poetry and therefore are sung to the harp.

[2] This exalted temper appears in the letters and biographies of many Puritans. See for example Bunyan's *Life*, and the *Pilgrim's Progress*.

caught a gleam of the Beatific Vision,[1] or woke screaming from dreams of everlasting fire. Like Vane,[2] he thought himself intrusted with the sceptre of the millennial year. Like Fleetwood, he cried in the bitterness of his soul that God had hid his face from him.[3] But when he took his seat in the council, or girt on his sword for war, these tempestuous workings of the soul had left no perceptible trace behind them. People who saw nothing of the godly but their uncouth visages, and heard nothing from them but their groans and their whining hymns, might laugh at them. But those had little reason to laugh who encountered them in the hall of debate or in the field of battle.[4] These fanatics brought to civil and military affairs a coolness of judgment and an immutability of purpose which some writers have thought inconsistent with their religious

[1] The *Visio beatifica* of the school-men, the philosophers of the Middle Ages, meaning the direct sight of God himself which makes the happiness of the blessed. See Dante, *Paradiso*, Canto XXXIII. See also *Paradise Lost*, Book I., v. 613. The idea is drawn from one of Jesus' beatitudes, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

[2] Sir Harry Vane (1612–1662), Puritan and mystic, was a republican by conviction and therefore leader of the theoretic republicans in Parliament against the protectorate of Cromwell. Cromwell himself, in the act of expelling the Parliament in 1653, uttered the historic exclamation, "The Lord deliver me from Sir Harry Vane!" Vane was governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1636–7, where he illustrated his impracticable idealism in the controversy with Winthrop and the clergy over the matter of Anne Hutchinson. He was executed by Charles II. as a regicide in 1662.

[3] Fleetwood, one of the officers of the army, married Cromwell's daughter. For this story of his weakness and religious mania when called upon to control the army after Cromwell's death, see Clarendon's *History* (XVI., 108). "God had spit in his face" were the wild words Fleetwood used.

[4] The "New Model Army" of 1646 was formed by Cromwell of religious volunteers, chiefly drawn from the Independents. It was never defeated.

zeal, but which were in fact the necessary effects of it. The intensity of their feelings on one subject made them tranquil on every other. One overpowering sentiment had subjected to itself pity and hatred, ambition and fear. Death had lost its terrors and pleasure its charms. They had their smiles and their tears, their raptures and their sorrows, but not for the things of this world. Enthusiasm had made them Stoics, had cleared their minds from every vulgar passion and prejudice, and raised them above the influence of danger and corruption. It sometimes might lead them to pursue unwise ends, but never to choose unwise means. They went through the world like Sir Artegal's iron man Talus [1] with his flail, crushing and trampling down oppressors, mingling with human beings, but having neither part nor lot in human infirmities; insensible to fatigue, to pleasure, and to pain, not to be pierced by any weapon, not to be withstood by any barrier.

83. Such we believe to have been the character of the Puritans. We perceive the absurdity of their manners. We dislike the sullen gloom of their domestic habits. We acknowledge that the tone of their minds was often injured by straining after things too high for mortal reach: and we know that, in spite of their hatred of Popery, they too often fell into the worst vices of that bad system, intolerance and extravagant austerity; that they had their anchorites [2] and their crusades,[3] their Dunstans and their De Montforts, their Dominics and their Escobars.[4] Yet, when all cir-

[1] Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, Book V.

[2] Anchorite, a Greek word meaning one who has retired from the world, a hermit.

[3] The wars waged in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries by the European Christians under the badge of the cross, to rescue the holy places of Palestine from the possession of Mohammedans. The word is now used of any warfare with a religious or even with any high moral purpose.

[4] Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury (959 A.D.), generally famous for

cumstances are taken into consideration, we do not hesitate to pronounce them a brave, a wise, an honest, and a useful body.

84. The Puritans espoused the cause of civil liberty mainly because it was the cause of religion. There was another party, by no means numerous, but distinguished by learning and ability, which co-operated with them on very different principles. We speak of those whom Cromwell was accustomed to call the Heathens, men who were, in the phraseology of that time, doubting Thomases or careless Gallios [1] with regard to religious subjects, but passionate worshippers of freedom. Heated by the study of ancient literature, they set up their country as their idol, and proposed to themselves the heroes of Plutarch [2] as their examples. They seem to have borne some resemblance to the Brissotines [3] of the French Revolution. But

his ruthlessness in putting his king, Edgar, under the power of the church. De Montfort was famous for the fierce cruelty with which he put down the religious heresy of the Albigenses in Provence in 1208. This is not Simon de Montfort, the great English earl. Dominic (1170–1221), a Spaniard who founded the great Dominican order of monks, famed for their vigor in pursuit of heresy, and as preachers and teachers. Escobar (1589–1669), a Spanish Jesuit, a writer on morals, celebrated for his alleged doctrine that purity of intention justifies actions in themselves wrong.

§ 84. *The Heathens.*

[1] See Matthew Arnold's essay on *Lord Falkland.* For Thomas the Doubter read *St. John* xx. 24; for Gallio, *Acts* xviii. 17.

[2] Plutarch (46 A.D.), author of a work containing parallel lives of forty-six Greeks and Romans, grouped in pairs. The inspiring tone of these famous biographies and the abundance of maxims and examples of lofty political conduct contained therein, have made Plutarch stimulating to the patriotism of young men of the poetic type in many great crises of the modern world's history. "Plutarch's men" is a by-word for the greatest men of antiquity. The best translation is North's (*Tudor Translations:* David Nutt).

[3] Brissotines, or Girondists, the moderate republicans who were

it is not very easy to draw the line of distinction between them and their devout associates, whose tone and manner they sometimes found it convenient to affect, and sometimes, it is probable, imperceptibly adopted.

85. We now come to the Royalists. We shall attempt to speak of them, as we have spoken of their antagonists, with perfect candour. We shall not charge upon a whole party the profligacy and baseness of the horse-boys, gamblers, and bravoes, whom the hope of license and plunder attracted from all the dens of Whitefriars [1] to the standard of Charles, and who disgraced their associates by excesses which, under the stricter discipline of the Parliamentary armies, were never tolerated. We will select a more favourable specimen. Thinking, as we do, that the cause of the King was the cause of bigotry and tyranny, we yet cannot refrain from looking with complacency on the character of the honest old Cavaliers.[2] We feel a national pride in comparing them with the instruments which the despots of other countries are compelled to employ, with the mutes who throng their ante-chambers, and the Janissaries[3] who mount guard at their gates. Our royalist countrymen were not heartless, dangling courtiers, bowing

overthrown by the Jacobins of the "Mountain" in the National convention. Their chiefs were executed in the Reign of Terror of 1793.

§ 85. *The Royalists.*

[1] Whitefriars, a district in London, named from the monastery established there in 1241. This district had certain privileges defending its residents against arrest by any law-officers until Charles II. abolished them. See Scott's *Fortunes of Nigel* for a picture of the inhabitants of Whitefriars in the reign of James I.

[2] Cavaliers, the party of Charles I.

[3] Janissaries, a Turkish word meaning "New Troops," a body of Turkish infantry, the Sultan's guard, originally composed of children kidnapped from Christian parents. This famous guard, becoming too powerful for the Sultan to control, was abolished in 1826 after a frightful conflict and massacre.

at every step, and simpering at every word. They were not mere machines for destruction dressed up in uniforms, caned into skill, intoxicated into valour, defending without love, destroying without hatred. There was a freedom in their subserviency, a nobleness in their very degradation. The sentiment of individual independence was strong within them. They were indeed misled, but by no base or selfish motive. Compassion and romantic honour, the prejudices of childhood, and the venerable names of history, threw over them a spell potent as that of Duessa;[1] and like the Red-Cross Knight, they thought that they were doing battle for an injured beauty, while they defended a false and loathsome sorceress. In truth they scarcely entered at all into the merits of the political question. It was not for a treacherous king or an intolerant church that they fought; but for the old banner which had waved in so many battles over the heads of their fathers, and for the altars at which they had received the hands of their brides. Though nothing could be more erroneous than their political opinions, they possessed, in a far greater degree than their adversaries, those qualities which are the grace of private life. With many of the vices of the Round Table[2] they had also many of its vir-

[1] *Faerie Queene*, Book I. In Spenser's allegory Duessa typifies Falsehood. There is a reference in this allegory to Mary of Scotland, one of whose extraordinary gifts it was to win the loyal attachment of all who saw her, while on the other hand she brought into shame and dishonor all who devoted themselves to her service.

[2] Allusion to King Arthur of Britain and his Round Table of champions. See Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* for modern versions of these old romances, and, for careful study, *The Legends of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table*, by J. T. Knowles (F. Warne & Co., 1895). In the legend Merlin, the enchanter, made the Round Table, at which were held the solemn feasts of Arthur's band of knights. The Romances of the Round Table reflect the customs and character of the times during which they were composed.

tues, courtesy, generosity, veracity, tenderness and respect for women. They had far more both of profound and polite learning than the Puritans. Their manners were more engaging, their tempers more amiable, their tastes more elegant, and their households more cheerful.

86. Milton did not strictly belong to any of the classes which we have described. He was not a Puritan. He was not a freethinker. He was not a Royalist. In his character the noblest qualities of every party were combined in harmonious union. From the Parliament and from the Court, from the conventicle [1] and from the Gothic [2] cloister,[3] from the gloomy and sepulchral circles of the Roundheads, and from the Christmas [4] revel of the hospitable Cavalier, his nature selected and drew to itself whatever was great and good, while it rejected all the base and pernicious ingredients by which those finer elements were defiled. Like the Puritans, he lived

"As ever in his great task-master's eye." [5]

§ 86. *Milton's own character composed of many different strains.*

[1] Conventicle, a place of meeting, secret or unauthorized, for religious worship. In England the name was specially used of the meetings of Dissenters.

[2] Gothic, the name of a form of architecture characterized by pointed arches and clustered columns, which belongs especially to mediæval churches and abbeys

[3] Cloister, a place of monastic retirement.

[4] The keeping of Christmas was made almost a party badge by the Royalists. Christmas was made a fast by Parliament in December, 1644. See Butler, in *Hudibras*:

"Rather than fail they will defy,
That which they love most tenderly;
Quarrel with Mince-pies and disparage
Their best and dearest friend, Plum porridge,
Fat pig and goose itself oppose,
And blaspheme Custard through the nose."

[5] *Sonnet VII.*

Like them, he kept his mind continually fixed on an Almighty Judge and an eternal reward. And hence he acquired their contempt of external circumstances, their fortitude, their tranquillity, their inflexible resolution. But not the coolest sceptic or the most profane scoffer was more perfectly free from the contagion of their frantic delusions, their savage manners, their ludicrous jargon,[1] their scorn of science, and their aversion to pleasure. Hating tyranny with a perfect hatred, he had nevertheless all the estimable and ornamental qualities which were almost entirely monopolised by the party of the tyrant. There was none who had a stronger sense of the value of literature, a finer relish for every elegant amusement, or a more chivalrous delicacy of honour and love. Though his opinions were democratic, his tastes and his associations were such as harmonise best with monarchy and aristocracy. He was under the influence of all the feelings by which the gallant Cavaliers were misled. But of those feelings he was the master and not the slave. Like the hero of Homer, he enjoyed all the pleasures of fascination; but he was not fascinated.[2] He listened to the song of the Sirens; yet he glided by without being seduced to their fatal shore. He tasted the cup of Circe; but he bore about him a sure antidote against the effects of its bewitching sweetness. The illusions which captivated his imagination never impaired his reasoning

[1] Jargon, confused, unintelligible talk. This refers to their peculiar diction, drawn so largely from misapplied phrases of the Old Testament of the English Bible. Macaulay has described this peculiarity above. Read some of Cromwell's letters for specimens.

[2] Ulysses, who, having had himself lashed to the mast of his ship, sailing by, heard the Sirens singing without the danger of being attracted to them. Circe, the enchantress, offered to all who entered her magic palace a cup to drink which changed them to beasts. Ulysses was previously provided with a more powerful magical herb, which secured its possessor against this disaster. He was untouched by the spell. The stories are in Homer's *Odyssey*, Books X. and XII.

powers. The statesman was proof against the splendour, the solemnity, and the romance which enchanted the poet. Any person who will contrast the sentiments expressed in his treatises on Prelacy[1] with the exquisite lines on ecclesiastical architecture and music in the Penseroso, which was published about the same time, will understand our meaning. This is an inconsistency which, more than anything else, raises his character in our estimation, because it shows how many private tastes and feelings he sacrificed, in order to do what he considered his duty to mankind. It is the very struggle of the noble Othello.[2] His heart relents ; but his hand is firm. He does nought in hate, but all in honour. He kisses the beautiful deceiver before he destroys her.

87. That from which the public character of Milton derives its great and peculiar splendour still remains to be mentioned. If he exerted himself to overthrow a forsworn [3] king and a persecuting hierarchy,[4] he exerted himself in conjunction with others. But the glory of the battle which he fought for that species of freedom which is the most valuable, and which was then the least understood, the freedom of the human mind, is all his own. Thousands and tens of thousands among his contemporaries raised their voices against Ship-money and the Star Chamber. But there were few indeed who discerned the more fearful evils of moral and intellectual slavery, and the benefits which would result from the liberty of the

§§ 87–92. THIRD DIVISION OF THE ESSAY. MILTON'S PROSE WRITINGS. *His pamphlets devoted to the emancipation of human thought.*

[1] See the Introduction, 14. Compare the well-known lines in *Il Penseroso* beginning, "Let my due feet never fail."

[2] See Shakespeare's *Othello*, Act V., Scene ii.

[3] Forsworn, perjured.

[4] Hierarchy, a body of persons organized in ranks and orders for rule over sacred things. Here the archbishops and bishops, the priests and deacons of the English church.

press[1] and the unfettered exercise of private judgment. These were the objects which Milton justly conceived to be the most important. He was desirous that the people should think for themselves as well as tax themselves, and be emancipated from the dominion of prejudice as well as from that of Charles. He knew that those who, with the best intentions, overlooked these schemes of reform, and contented themselves with pulling down the King and imprisoning the malignant,[2] acted like the heedless brothers in his own poem, who, in their eagerness to disperse the train of the sorcerer, neglected the means of liberating the captive. They thought only of conquering when they should have thought of disenchanting.

> "Oh, ye mistook! Ye should have snatched his wand
> And bound him fast. Without the rod reversed,
> And backward mutters of dissevering power,
> We cannot free the lady that sits here
> Bound in strong fetters fixed and motionless."[3]

88. To reverse the rod, to spell the charm backward, to break the ties which bound a stupefied people to the seat of enchantment, was the noble aim of Milton. To this all his public conduct was directed. For this he joined the Presbyterians; for this he forsook them. He fought their perilous battle; but he turned away with disdain from their insolent triumph. He saw that they, like those whom they had vanquished, were hostile to the liberty of thought. He therefore joined the Independents, and called upon Cromwell to break the secular[4] chain, and to

[1] This subject is discussed in the best known of Milton's prose works, the *Areopagitica*. It is published in the *Clarendon Press Series;* also in Bohn's *Milton's Prose Works*, Vol. II.

[2] Malignant, a term applied by friends of the Parliament to all who took sides with the king.

[3] *Comus*, 815–819.

[4] *Sonnet XVI.* "Secular chain," church government by state-officials, who are called secular, *i.e.*, not religious or spiritual.

save free conscience from the paw of the Presbyterian wolf. With a view to the same great object, he attacked the licensing system,[1] in that sublime treatise which every statesman should wear as a sign upon his hand and as frontlets[2] between his eyes. His attacks were, in general, directed less against particular abuses than against those deeply seated errors on which almost all abuses are founded, the servile worship of eminent men, and the irrational dread of innovation.

89. That he might shake the foundations of these debasing sentiments more effectually, he always selected for himself the boldest literary services. He never came up in the rear when the outworks had been carried and the breach entered. He pressed into the forlorn hope.[3] At the beginning of the changes, he wrote with incomparable energy and eloquence against the bishops. But, when his opinion seemed likely to prevail, he passed on to other subjects, and abandoned prelacy to the crowd of writers who now hastened to insult a falling party. There is no more hazardous enterprise than that of bearing the torch of truth into those dark and infected recesses in which no light has ever shone. But it was the choice and the pleasure of Milton to penetrate the noisome vapours, and to brave the terrible explosion.[4] Those who most disapprove of his opinions must respect the hardihood with which he

[1] The law requiring all publications in print to be licensed by government.

[2] Frontlet, a band on the forehead, worn during prayers, on which devout Jews inscribe sacred texts of their law. See *Deuteronomy* vi. 8; xi. 18. The treatise alluded to is the *Areopagitica*. See Introduction, 14.

[3] A body of troops put upon a desperate service is called in military language a "forlorn hope."

[4] Allusion to the dangers of miners exploring the unventilated recesses of a coal-mine, from the presence of explosive gases which take fire from a lantern.

maintained them. He, in general, left to others the credit of expounding and defending the popular parts of his religious and political creed. He took his own stand upon those which the great body of his countrymen reprobated as criminal, or derided as paradoxical. He stood up for divorce and regicide.[1] He attacked the prevailing systems of education.[2] His radiant and beneficent career resembled that of the god of light and fertility.

> Nitor in adversum ; nec me, qui cætera, vincit
> Impetus, et rapido contrarius evehor orbi.[3]

90. It is to be regretted that the prose writings of Milton should, in our time, be so little read. As compositions, they deserve the attention of every man who wishes to become acquainted with the full power of the English language. They abound with passages compared with which the finest declamations of Burke sink into insignificance.[4] They are a perfect field of cloth of gold.[5] The style is stiff with gorgeous embroidery. Not even in the earlier books of the Paradise Lost has the great poet ever risen higher than in those parts of his controversial works in which his

[1] The first edition adds: "He ridiculed the *Eikon*." See Introduction, 16.

[2] In his Tractate: *Of Education*. See *Milton's Prose Works*, Vol. III.

[3] Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, II., 72, 73. These are the words of the Sun-god, describing his climbing up against the motion of the sky, which is supposed in ancient astronomy to revolve in a direction contrary to the sun and the planets, and with a different speed. "I struggle against opposition: nor can I be conquered by the force which conquers all else ; against the swift motion of the heavens I ride on." For a beautiful account of these heavenly motions, see Cicero's *de Republica*, Book VI.

[4] Edmund Burke (1729–1797), a writer of English prose, who was noted for the splendor of his diction.

[5] Allusion to the famous pageant of Henry VIII. and Francis I.

feelings, excited by conflict, find a vent in bursts of devotional and lyric rapture. It is, to borrow his own majestic language, "a sevenfold chorus of hallelujahs and harping symphonies."[1]

91. We had intended to look more closely at these performances, to analyse the peculiarities of the diction, to dwell at some length on the sublime wisdom of the Areopagitica, and the nervous rhetoric of the Iconoclast, and to point out some of those magnificent passages which occur in the Treatise of Reformation, and the Animadversions on the Remonstrant. But the length to which our remarks have already extended renders this impossible.[2]

92. We must conclude. And yet we can scarcely tear ourselves away from the subject. The days immediately following the publication of this relic of Milton appear to be peculiarly set apart, and consecrated to his memory. And we shall scarcely be censured if, on this his festival, we be found lingering near his shrine, how worthless soever may be the offering which we bring to it. While this book lies on our table, we seem to be contemporaries of the great poet. We are transported a hundred and fifty years back.[3] We can almost fancy that we are visiting him in his small lodging; that we see him sitting at the old organ beneath the faded green hangings; that we can catch the quick twinkle of his eyes, rolling in vain to find the day; that we are reading in the lines of his noble countenance the proud and mournful history of his glory

§§ 92 to End. CONCLUSION: *A vision of Milton.*

[1] For estimates of Milton's prose style, see the essays on Milton by Arnold and Lowell mentioned in the Introduction. Also consult Pattison's *Milton.* This phrase is from *The Reason of Church Government, Milton's Prose Works*, Vol. II.

[2] For some account of these works, see the Introduction, p. 14.

[3] This description is based upon an account given by a clergyman named Dr. Wright, who visited Milton in his lodgings. This account is preserved by Richardson, the painter, in his *Notes on Milton.*

and his affliction. We image to ourselves the breathless silence in which we should listen to his slightest word, the passionate veneration with which we should kneel to kiss his hand and weep upon it, the earnestness with which we should endeavour to console him, if indeed such a spirit could need consolation, for the neglect of an age unworthy of his talents and his virtues, the eagerness with which we should contest with his daughters, or with his Quaker friend Elwood,[1] the privilege of reading Homer to him, or of taking down the immortal accents which flowed from his lips.

93. These are perhaps foolish feelings. Yet we cannot be ashamed of them; nor shall we be sorry if what we have written shall in any degree excite them in other minds. We are not much in the habit of idolizing either the living or the dead. And we think that there is no more certain indication of a weak and ill-regulated intellect than that propensity which, for want of a better name, we will venture to christen Boswellism.[2] But there are a few characters which have stood the closest scrutiny and the severest tests, which have been tried in the furnace and have proved pure, which have been weighed in the balance and have not been found wanting, which have been declared sterling by the general consent of mankind,

[1] Thomas Elwood, a young Quaker, one of the friends and disciples who frequented the house of Milton in his old age. His biography, a very interesting book, is published in the *Great Biography Series*, edited by Howells (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.).

[2] After James Boswell, who wrote the famous life of his idol, Samuel Johnson. In it he records devoutly the most minute particulars of Johnson's life and personal habits. Macaulay reviews Croker's edition of this great book in a very amusing but not very just article (*Edinburgh Review*, 1831). In it he says: "Boswell was one of the smallest men that ever lived, and he has beaten all biographies." "His work is universally allowed to be interesting, instructive, and original, yet it has brought the author nothing but contempt."

and which are visibly stamped with the image and superscription of the Most High.[1] These great men we trust that we know how to prize; and of these was Milton. The sight of his books, the sound of his name, are pleasant to us. His thoughts resemble those celestial fruits and flowers which the Virgin Martyr of Massinger[2] sent down from the gardens of Paradise to the earth, distinguished from the productions of other soils, not only by their superior bloom and sweetness, but by their miraculous efficacy to invigorate and to heal. They are powerful, not only to delight, but to elevate and purify. Nor do we envy the man who can study either the life or the writings of the great poet and patriot, without aspiring to emulate, not indeed the sublime works with which his genius has enriched our literature, but the zeal with which he laboured for the public good, the fortitude with which he endured every private calamity, the lofty disdain with which he looked down on temptation and dangers, the deadly hatred which he bore to bigots and tyrants, and the faith which he so sternly kept with his country and with his fame.[3]

[1] Phrases from the English Bible. See *Daniel* v. 27; *Matthew* xxii. 20. It would be an interesting inquiry to trace the Biblical phraseology all through this essay.

[2] Philip Massinger (1583-1640), an English dramatist, who edited or wrote largely a very popular play with this title, of which the heroine is a Christian martyr. The miracle described here was performed for the benefit of the scoffing persecutor, who challenges his victim, the Virgin Martyr, to send him back a flower from that Paradise to which she says she is going. Accordingly after her death, an angel appears on the stage bearing flowers and fruits from that celestial world.

[3] For a discussion of Macaulay's florid rhetoric in these and similar paragraphs, read Matthew Arnold's essay entitled *A French Critic on Milton.*

THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF ADDISON

(*Edinburgh Review*, July, 1843.)

The Life of Joseph Addison. By LUCY AIKIN,[1] 2 vols. 8vo. London, 1843.

1. SOME reviewers are of opinion that a lady who dares to publish a book renounces by that act the franchises appertaining to her sex, and can claim no exemption from the utmost rigour of critical procedure. From that opinion we dissent. We admit, indeed, that in a country which boasts of many female writers, eminently qualified by their talents and acquirements to influence the public mind, it would be of most pernicious consequence that inaccurate history or unsound philosophy should be suffered to pass uncensured, merely because the offender chanced to be a lady. But we conceive that, on such occasions, a critic would do well to imitate the courteous Knight[2] who found himself compelled by duty to keep the lists against Bradamante.[2] He, we are told, defended successfully the cause of which he was the champion; but, before the fight began, exchanged Balisarda[2] for a less deadly sword, of which he carefully blunted the point and edge.

§§ 1–3. *Criticism of Miss Aikin's Life of Addison.*

[1] Lucy Aikin (1781–1864), daughter of Dr. John Aikin and sister of Mrs. Barbauld. Her best known works are *Memoirs of the Court of James I.*, *Memoirs of the Court of Charles I.*, and this *Life*. She has some fame also as a correspondent of Dr. Channing, the American preacher; and their letters have been published.

[2] See Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, XLV., 68. Bradamante, sister of Rinaldo, loves Ruggiero, the "courteous knight." In many adventures

2. Nor are the immunities of sex the only immunities which Miss Aikin may rightfully plead. Several of her works, and especially the very pleasing Memoirs of the Reign of James the First, have fully entitled her to the privileges enjoyed by good writers. One of those privileges we hold to be this, that such writers, when, either from the unlucky choice of a subject, or from the indolence too often produced by success, they happen to fail, shall not be subjected to the severe discipline which it is sometimes necessary to inflict upon dunces and impostors, but shall merely be reminded by a gentle touch, like that with which the Laputan flapper roused his dreaming lord, that it is high time to wake.[1]

3. Our readers will probably infer from what we have said that Miss Aikin's book has disappointed us. The truth is, that she is not well acquainted with her subject. No person who is not familiar with the political and literary history of England during the reigns of William the Third, of Anne, and of George the First, can possibly write a good life of Addison.[2] Now, we mean no reproach

in which she figures as a knight in armor with an enchanted sword, she shows the prowess of a warrior. In the adventure here referred to, her hand in marriage is to be the prize of the contest. Unknown to herself her own lover is her disguised antagonist. He purposely blunts the edge of his sword with a hammer, that he may not injure his liege lady. The duty alluded to was his promise to fight as the representative of another prince.

The champions of the romances of chivalry had names for their swords, as well as for their horses. Compare Arthur's sword Excalibur, Orlando's Durindana, Siegfried's Nothung.

[1] *Gulliver's Travels*, Part III., Ch. 2. "Those persons [in Laputa] who are able to afford it always keep a flapper in their family. The business of this officer is, gently to stroke the mouth of him who is to speak, and the right ear of him to whom the speaker addresses himself."

[2] Macaulay's *History of England from the Accession of James II.* was intended to cover this ground (1688–1727) but was broken off at the death of William III.

to Miss Aikin, and many will think that we pay her a compliment, when we say that her studies have taken a different direction. She is better acquainted with Shakspeare and Raleigh,[1] than with Congreve and Prior[2]; and is far more at home among the ruffs and peaked beards of Theobald's,[3] than among the Steenkirks and flowing periwigs[4] which surrounded Queen Anne's tea table[5] at Hampton. She seems to have written about the Elizabethan age, because she had read much about it; she seems, on the other hand, to have read a little about the age of Addison, because she had determined to write about it. The consequence is that she has had to describe men and things without having either a correct or a vivid idea of them, and that she has often fallen into errors of a very serious kind. The reputation which Miss Aikin has justly earned stands so high, and the charm of Addison's letters is so

[1] Sir Walter Raleigh (1552–1618), the famous English navigator and courtier of Queen Elizabeth.

[2] William Congreve (1672–1729), a writer of comedies which are distinguished for wit and for fine character-drawing, but which were, like other plays of the day, immoral and heartless. Matthew Prior (1664–1721), a poet, wit, and Tory politician. See Ward's *English Poets*.

[3] Ruffs, projecting muslin bands round the neck, worn in the sixteenth century. Theobald's, the seat of Lord Burleigh, Elizabeth's prime-minister.

[4] Or Steinkirk, a large cravat of fine lace, loosely knotted, with one end passed through the buttonhole. The cravat commemorates by its name the disordered and hasty dress of the young French nobles at the battle of Steenkerke (1692). Periwigs, or perukes, immense wigs covered with curls, worn from 1660 to 1725 by all gentlemen in full dress. A reminiscence of this fashion is still to be seen in the big wig of the English Lord Chancellor.

[5] Tea was first known in England about 1660; it became a fashionable beverage in Queen Anne's time. *Cf.* Pope's familiar couplet, "Imperial Anna, whom three realms obey; who sometimes counsel takes, and sometimes tea." Hampton Court, the palace built by Cardinal Wolsey, was a favorite residence of Queen Anne.

great, that a second edition of this work may probably be required. If so, we hope that every paragraph will be revised, and that every date and fact about which there can be the smallest doubt will be carefully verified.

4. To Addison himself we are bound by a sentiment as much like affection as any sentiment can be, which is inspired by one who has been sleeping a hundred and twenty years in Westminster Abbey. We trust, however, that this feeling will not betray us into that abject idolatry which we have often had occasion to reprehend in others, and which seldom fails to make both the idolater and the idol ridiculous. A man of genius and virtue is but a man. All his powers cannot be equally developed; nor can we expect from him perfect self-knowledge. We need not, therefore, hesitate to admit that Addison has left us some compositions which do not rise above mediocrity, some heroic poems hardly equal to Parnell's,[1] some criticism as superficial as Dr. Blair's,[2] and a tragedy not very much better than Dr. Johnson's.[3] It is praise enough to say of a writer that, in a high department of literature, in which many eminent writers have distinguished themselves, he has had no equal; and this may with strict justice be said of Addison.

5. As a man, he may not have deserved the adoration which he received from those who, bewitched by his fascinating society, and indebted for all the comforts of life

§§ 4–5. *A guarded estimate of Addison as a writer, and an enthusiastic judgment of his character as a man.*

[1] Thomas Parnell (1679–1717), an Irish poet, author of the *Hermit* and other poems.

[2] Hugh Blair (1718–1800), a Scotch preacher. He wrote a famous rhetoric, and became the leading authority on this subject in the eighteenth century. His critical faculty may be measured by the fact that he believed in the genuineness of Ossian's poems.

[3] Dr. Johnson (see *Essay on Milton*, § 9) wrote a tragedy called *Irene*.

to his generous and delicate friendship, worshipped him nightly, in his favourite temple at Button's.[1] But, after full inquiry and impartial reflection, we have long been convinced that he deserved as much love and esteem as can be justly claimed by any of our infirm and erring race. Some blemishes may undoubtedly be detected in his character; but the more carefully it is examined, the more will it appear, to use the phrase of the old anatomists, sound in the noble parts,[2] free from all taint of perfidy, of cowardice, of cruelty, of ingratitude, of envy. Men may easily be named, in whom some particular good disposition has been more conspicuous than in Addison. But the just harmony of qualities, the exact temper between the stern and the humane virtues, the habitual observance of every law, not only of moral rectitude, but of moral grace and dignity, distinguish him from all men who have been tried by equally strong temptations, and about whose conduct we possess equally full information.

6. His father was the Reverend Lancelot Addison, who, though eclipsed by his more celebrated son, made some figure in the world, and occupies with credit two folio pages in the Biographia Britannica.[3] Lancelot was sent up, as a poor scholar, from Westmoreland to Queen's College, Oxford, in the time of the Commonwealth,[4] made some progress in learning, became, like most of his fellow students, a violent Royalist, lampooned the heads of the

§§ 6. *Sketch of Addison's father* (1632-1703).

[1] Button's, a favorite coffee-house, established by a servant of Addison's.

[2] The heart, liver, lungs, and brain; the vital organs.

[3] *Biographia Britannica*, a book published in 1766, containing the lives of many distinguished Britons.

[4] 1649–1660. Oxford was held and fortified by the King during the Civil War, but was captured by Cromwell. The collegians were generally on the King's side, though Hampden, Pym, Eliot, and other great Puritans were Oxford men. After the war, Parliament sent a com-

University, and was forced to ask pardon on his bended knees. When he had left college, he earned a humble subsistence by reading the liturgy of the fallen Church[1] to the families of those sturdy squires whose manor[2] houses were scattered over the Wild of Sussex.[3] After the Restoration, his loyalty was rewarded with the post of chaplain to the garrison of Dunkirk.[4] When Dunkirk was sold to France, he lost his employment. But Tangier[5] had been ceded by Portugal to England as part of the marriage portion of the Infanta Catharine[6]; and to Tangier Lancelot Addison was sent. A more miserable situation can hardly be conceived. It was difficult to say whether the unfortunate settlers were more tormented by the heats or by the rains, by the soldiers within the wall or by the Moors[7] without it. One advantage the chaplain had. He enjoyed an excellent opportunity of studying the history and manners of Jews and Mahometans; and of this opportunity he appears to have made excellent use. On his return to England, after some

mission to reform the University. Cromwell himself was "Chancellor" for seven years (1651–1658).

[1] Cromwell suppressed Episcopal worship (1655), but zealous Episcopalians continued to worship in private.

[2] The manors of England were originally estates of landlords, each with a village of serfs or laborers upon it. On these manorial estates was the manor-house, the house of the baron, or, in modern English, the "squire."

[3] Wild (or "weald," an Anglo-Saxon word meaning forest) of Sussex, the northern part of the county.

[4] Dunkirk (Dunkerque), a city in Flanders, ceded to England in 1658, and bought back by the French in 1662.

[5] Tangier, the principal commercial city of Morocco. It had belonged to Portugal since 1471.

[6] Catherine of Braganza, who married Charles II. The daughter of a Spanish or Portuguese sovereign is called "Infanta."

[7] All the inhabitants of Morocco are inaccurately called Moors, although at present there are many Berbers, negroes, Arabs, as well as Jews and European natives among them.

years of banishment, he published an interesting volume on the Polity and Religion of Barbary, and another on the Hebrew Customs and the State of Rabbinical Learning. He rose to eminence in his profession, and became one of the royal chaplains, a Doctor of Divinity, Archdeacon of Salisbury, and Dean of Lichfield. It is said that he would have been made a bishop after the Revolution,[1] if he had not given offence to the government by strenuously opposing, in the Convocation[2] of 1689, the liberal policy of William and Tillotson.

7. In 1672, not long after Dr. Addison's return from Tangier, his son Joseph was born. Of Joseph's childhood we know little. He learned his rudiments at schools in his father's neighbourhood, and was then sent to the Charter House.[3] The anecdotes which are popularly related about his boyish tricks do not harmonize very well with what we know of his riper years. There remains a tradition that he was the ringleader in a barring out,[4] and another tradition that he ran away from school and hid himself in a wood, where he fed on berries and slept in a hollow tree, till after a long search he was discovered and brought home. If these stories be true, it would be curious to

§§ 7–9. *Addison's youth and education.*

[1] The flight of James II. and succession of William III. (1688).

[2] The assembly representing the clergy of the Church of England. It was called together by William III. in 1689 to consider a plan for admitting the Presbyterians and other Dissenters into the church. Tillotson (1630–1694), Archbishop of Canterbury, a great English preacher, was head of the Low-church party in this reign.

[3] One of the great public schools of England, originally founded as a Carthusian monastery in London in 1371. The school has gone to Surrey, but the buildings are to-day used for a charity-school in charge of the Merchant Taylors.

[4] Barricading the school-house against the masters when a school seeks redress of grievances. See a famous instance in Miss Edgeworth's *Parent's Assistant.*

know by what moral discipline so mutinous and enterprising a lad was transformed into the gentlest and most modest of men.

8. We have abundant proof that, whatever Joseph's pranks may have been, he pursued his studies vigorously and successfully. At fifteen he was not only fit for the university, but carried thither a classical taste and a stock of learning which would have done honour to a Master of Arts.[1] He was entered at Queen's College, Oxford ; but he had not been many months there, when some of his Latin verses fell by accident into the hands of Dr. Lancaster, Dean of Magdalene College.[2] The young scholar's diction and versification were already such as veteran professors might envy. Dr. Lancaster was desirous to serve a boy of such promise ; nor was an opportunity long wanting. The Revolution[3] had just taken place ; and nowhere had it been hailed with more delight than at Magdalene College. That great and opulent corporation had been treated by James, and by his Chancellor,[4] with an insolence and injustice which, even in such a Prince and in such a Minister, may justly excite amazement, and which had done more than even the prosecution of the Bishops to alienate the Church of England from the throne. A president, duly elected, had been violently expelled from his dwelling : a Papist[5] had been set over the society by a royal mandate : the Fellows who, in conformity with their oaths, had refused to

[1] The well-known academical degree, granted to one who had mastered the Liberal Arts in the mediæval universities; now it is given by colleges and universities at the conclusion of certain courses of higher study, or more carelessly as an honorary mark of general merit.

[2] Pronounced "Maudlin" The Oxford spelling is Magdalen. It is one of the most beautiful of the Oxford colleges.

[3] Of 1688. See Introduction, § 19.

[4] The notorious Jeffreys. For all this history, see Macaulay's *England*, vol. III., chap. VIII

[5] The current term of opprobrium for a Roman Catholic.

submit to this usurper, had been driven forth from their quiet cloisters and gardens, to die of want or to live on charity. But the day of redress and retribution speedily came. The intruders were ejected: the venerable House was again inhabited by its old inmates: learning flourished under the rule of the wise and virtuous Hough; and with learning was united a mild and liberal spirit too often wanting in the princely colleges of Oxford. In consequence of the troubles through which the society had passed, there had been no valid election of new members during the year 1688. In 1689, therefore, there was twice the ordinary number of vacancies; and thus Dr. Lancaster found it easy to procure for his young friend admittance to the advantages of a foundation then generally esteemed the wealthiest in Europe.

9. At Magdalene Addison resided during ten years. He was, at first, one of those scholars who are called Demies,[1] but was subsequently elected a fellow. His college is still proud of his name: his portrait still hangs in the hall; and strangers are still told that his favourite walk was under the elms which fringe the meadow on the banks of the Cherwell.[2] It is said, and is highly probable, that he was distinguished among his fellow students by the delicacy of his feelings, by the shyness of his manners, and by the assiduity with which he often prolonged his studies far into the night. It is certain that his reputation for ability and learning stood high. Many years later, the ancient Doctors of Magdalene continued to talk in their

[1] Demy, accented on the last syllable, a name of uncertain origin, given the scholars of Magdalen only Each college and school in England loves to have its own peculiar terminology for the usual academic functions. Thus, the heads of different colleges are called Master, President, and Warden in the same university.

[2] The pretty river on which the pleasure-boating and swimming of young Oxford is still done.

common room of his boyish compositions, and expressed their sorrow that no copy of exercises so remarkable had been preserved.

10. It is proper, however, to remark that Miss Aikin has committed the error, very pardonable in a lady, of overrating Addison's classical attainments. In one department of learning, indeed, his proficiency was such as it is hardly possible to overrate. His knowledge of the Latin poets, from Lucretius and Catullus down to Claudian and Prudentius,[1] was singularly exact and profound. He understood them thoroughly, entered into their spirit, and had the finest and most discriminating perception of all their peculiarities of style and melody ; nay, he copied their manner with admirable skill, and surpassed, we think, all their British imitators who had preceded him, Buchanan[2] and Milton alone excepted. This is high praise ; and beyond this we cannot with justice go. It is clear that Addison's serious attention, during his residence at the university, was almost entirely concentrated on Latin poetry, and that, if he did not wholly neglect other provinces of ancient literature, he vouchsafed to them only a cursory glance. He does not appear to have attained more than an ordinary acquaintance with the political and moral writers of Rome ; nor was his own Latin prose by any means equal to his Latin verse. His knowledge of Greek, though

§§ 10-16. *Miss Aikin has overestimated Addison's scholarship; curious limitations of his reading.*

[1] T. Lucretius Carus (96-55 B.C.). He wrote a great poem (*On the Universe*) to set forth the principles of the Epicurean philosophy. C. Valerius Catullus (87-54 B.C.), a writer of beautiful lyric verses. These two are the earliest Latin poets of whose works any large amount remains (if we except the comedies of Plautus and Terence). They are about contemporary with Cæsar. Claudianus (circa 365 A.D.) and Prudentius (circa 400) represent the latest classical Latin poetry.

[2] George Buchanan, tutor of Mary Queen of Scots and James VI. He wrote Latin poems and a paraphrase of the Psalms.

doubtless such as was, in his time, thought respectable at Oxford, was evidently less than that which many lads now carry away every year from Eton and Rugby. A minute examination of his works, if we had time to make such an examination, would fully bear out these remarks. We will briefly advert to a few of the facts on which our judgment is grounded.

11. Great praise is due to the Notes which Addison appended to his version of the second and third books of the Metamorphoses.[1] Yet those notes, while they show him to have been, in his own domain, an accomplished scholar, show also how confined that domain was. They are rich in apposite references to Virgil,[2] Statius,[3] and Claudian; but they contain not a single illustration drawn from the Greek poets. Now, if, in the whole compass of Latin literature, there be a passage which stands in need of illustration drawn from the Greek poets, it is the story of Pentheus in the third book of the Metamorphoses. Ovid was indebted for that story to Euripides[4] and Theocritus,[5] both of whom he has sometimes followed minutely. But neither to Euripides nor to Theocritus does Addison make the faintest allusion; and we, therefore, believe that we do not wrong him by supposing that he had little or no knowledge of their works.

12. His travels in Italy, again, abound with classical

[1] The title of the principal work of the Roman poet, P. Ovidius Naso (43 B.C.–17 A.D.), a collection of all the stories of "transformations" in Greek mythology.

[2] P. Vergilius Maro (70-19 B.C.), author of the national Roman Epic, the *Æneid*, the *Georgics*, a didactic poem on farm-life, and the *Bucolics*, a set of short poems, imitations from the Greek "shepherd's poetry" or pastorals.

[3] Publius Statius (45-96 A.D.), author of the *Thebais*.

[4] Euripides, the third Athenian tragedian. See *Essay on Milton*, § 26.

[5] Theocritus (270 B.C.), a writer of Greek pastorals. See *Essay on Milton*, § 46.

quotations happily introduced; but scarcely one of those quotations is in prose. He draws more illustrations from Ausonius[1] and Manilius[2] than from Cicero. Even his notions of the political and military affairs of the Romans seem to be derived from poets and poetasters. Spots made memorable by events which have changed the destinies of the world, and which have been worthily recorded by great historians, bring to his mind only scraps of some ancient versifier. In the gorge of the Apennines he naturally remembers the hardships which Hannibal's army endured, and proceeds to cite, not the authentic narrative of Polybius,[3] not the picturesque narrative of Livy,[4] but the languid hexameters of Silius Italicus.[5] On the banks of the Rubicon[6] he never thinks of Plutarch's[7] lively description, or of the stern conciseness of the Commentaries,[8] or of those letters to Atticus[9] which so forcibly express the alternations of hope and fear in a sensitive mind at a great

[1] D. Magnus Ausonius (310–394 A.D.), a Latin Christian poet.

[2] M. Manilius (date uncertain), a writer of a Latin poem on astronomy.

[3] Polybius (204–125 B.C.), a celebrated Greek who was taken to Rome as a prisoner and there became interested in the Romans. He wrote a great history of Rome in forty books, five of which we have.

[4] Titus Livius (59 B.C.–17 A.D.) wrote a history of Rome in one hundred and forty-two books, thirty-five of which we have.

[5] Silius Italicus (25 A.D.) wrote an epic poem on the Punic war, still existing. His poetry is full of Italian geographical names.

[6] A river separating Italy proper from Cisalpine Gaul. Cæsar, whose province in Gaul ended at the Rubicon, broke the law by carrying his army across into Italy.

[7] Plutarch, (46 A.D.) a Greek historian, who wrote forty-six *Parallel Lives* of eminent Greeks and Romans. This refers to his story of Julius Cæsar's crossing the Rubicon in his *Life of Cæsar*.

[8] As a matter of fact, it is Cæsar's *Civil War* he ought to think of on the banks of the Rubicon.

[9] Cicero's most intimate friend. A number of letters from Cicero to him are preserved.

crisis. His only authority for the events of the civil war is Lucan.[1]

13. All the best ancient works of art at Rome and Florence are Greek. Addison saw them, however, without recalling one single verse of Pindar,[2] of Callimachus,[3] or of the Attic dramatists[4]; but they brought to his recollection innumerable passages of Horace,[5] Juvenal,[6] Statius, and Ovid.

14. The same may be said of the Treatise on Medals.[7] In that pleasing work we find about three hundred passages extracted with great judgment from the Roman poets; but we do not recollect a single passage taken from any Roman orator or historian; and we are confident that not a line is quoted from any Greek writer. No person, who had derived all his information on the subject of medals from Addison, would suspect that the Greek coins were in historical interest equal, and in beauty of execution far superior to those of Rome.

15. If it were necessary to find any further proof that Addison's classical knowledge was confined within narrow limits, that proof would be furnished by his Essay on the Evidences of Christianity. The Roman poets throw little or no light on the literary and historical questions which he is under the necessity of examining in that Essay. He is,

[1] M. Annæus Lucanus (39–65 A.D.), author of a poem in ten books on the Civil War.

[2] Pindar, a great Theban poet (522 B.C.–443 B.C.).

[3] Callimachus (about 260 B.C.), a famous Alexandrian critic and poet.

[4] Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides. See *Essay on Milton*, § 26 ff.

[5] Quintus Horatius Flaccus (65–8 B.C.), the famous Roman lyric poet.

[6] D. Junius Juvenalis (60–140 A.D.), the great Roman satirist.

[7] A book by Addison. "Medal" was used in Addison's time to indicate ancient coins, especially in the precious metals. Now it means rather a coin struck to commemorate something, not to be used as money.

therefore, left completely in the dark; and it is melancholy to see how helplessly he gropes his way from blunder to blunder. He assigns, as grounds for his religious belief, stories as absurd as that of the Cock-Lane ghost,[1] and forgeries as rank as Ireland's Vortigern,[2] puts faith in the lie about the Thundering Legion,[3] is convinced that Tiberius[4] moved the senate to admit Jesus among the gods, and pronounces the letter of Agbarus King of Edessa[5] to be a record of great authority. Nor were these errors the effects of superstition; for to superstition Addison was by no means prone. The truth is that he was writing about what he did not understand.

16. Miss Aikin has discovered a letter, from which it appears that, while Addison resided at Oxford, he was one of several writers whom the booksellers engaged to make an English version of Herodotus;[6] and she infers that he must have been a good Greek scholar. We can allow very

[1] A famous ghost, a "luminous lady," accompanied by knockings and strange noises, who appeared in London in 1762. She was a fraud, but Dr. Johnson made her famous by investigating and believing.

[2] *Vortigern and Rowena*, a play written by William Henry Ireland, and published in his famous forged Shakespearian manuscripts. He actually wrote this whole play in Shakespeare's autograph and it was put on the stage in 1796 by Kemble.

[3] A Christian legion in the army of the Roman emperor, Marcus Aurelius. Its prayer for rain was answered by a thunder storm which destroyed numbers of the enemy. The legend is made to account for a name for a legion which was common enough in the Roman armies.

[4] Tiberius Claudius Nero (42 B.C.–37 A.D.), the Roman emperor under whom the Crucifixion occurred. Tertullian told this story in the second century, A.D.

[5] Eusebius, an early Christian father, relates that this king wrote a letter to Christ, asking him to come and heal him, and that Christ wrote an answer. Both letters are given by Eusebius.

[6] Herodotus (480–434 B.C.), the great Greek historian of the Persian wars.

little weight to this argument, when we consider that his fellow-labourers were to have been Boyle[1] and Blackmore.[2] Boyle is remembered chiefly as the nominal author of the worst book on Greek history and philology that ever was printed; and this book, bad as it is, Boyle was unable to produce without help. Of Blackmore's attainments in the ancient tongues, it may be sufficient to say that, in his prose, he has confounded an aphorism[3] with an apophthegm, and that when, in his verse, he treats of classical subjects, his habit is to regale his readers with four false quantities[4] to a page.

17. It is probable that the classical acquirements of Addison were of as much service to him as if they had been more extensive. The world generally gives its admiration, not to the man who does what nobody else even attempts to do, but to the man who does best what multitudes do well. Bentley[5] was so immeasurably superior to all the other scholars of his time that few among them could discover his superiority. But the accomplishment in which Addison excelled his contemporaries was then, as it is now,

§ 17-20. *His Latin Poetry.*

[1] Charles Boyle (1676–1731), afterwards Earl of Orrery. The book referred to is a publication on the controversy over the *Epistles* of Phalaris with the great Bentley. See Macaulay's *Essay on Sir William Temple*, and Swift's *Battle of the Books*.

[2] Sir Richard Blackmore (1650–1729), a physician and long-winded poet.

[3] An aphorism is a definition or short sentence expressing some important truth of a speculative sort. An apophthegm or apothegm is simply a proverb or maxim. The distinction is a very slight one.

[4] It is the special anxiety of English scholarship to distinguish accurately the long and short Latin vowels. Many good stories illustrate the English intolerance of a "false quantity."

[5] Richard Bentley (1662–1742), the greatest of English classical scholars and critics, master of Trinity College, Cambridge. See his life by Dr. Jebb, in the English Men of Letters Series.

highly valued and assiduously cultivated at all English seats of learning. Every body who had been at a public school[1] had written Latin verses; many had written such verses with tolerable success, and were quite able to appreciate, though by no means able to rival, the skill with which Addison imitated Virgil. His lines on the Barometer and the Bowling Green were applauded by hundreds, to whom the Dissertation on the Epistles of Phalaris[2] was as unintelligible as the hieroglyphics on an obelisk.

18. Purity of style, and an easy flow of numbers, are common to all Addison's Latin poems. Our favourite piece is the Battle of the Cranes and Pygmies; for in that piece we discern a gleam of the fancy and humour which many years later enlivened thousands of breakfast tables. Swift[3] boasted that he was never known to steal a hint; and he certainly owed as little to his predecessors as any modern writer. Yet we cannot help suspecting that he borrowed, perhaps unconsciously, one of the happiest touches in his Voyage to Lilliput from Addison's verses. Let our readers judge.

19. "The Emperor," says Gulliver, "is taller by about the breadth of my nail than any of his court, which alone is enough to strike an awe into the beholders."

[1] In England, certain great schools like Eton, Harrow, and Rugby are endowed for public instruction, but since Addison's time they have been in the hands of the wealthy and titled classes only. Then, as now, the pupils of these schools spent most of their time upon classical learning, which thus became a mark of social prestige in England. The old pupils of the public schools played the chief part in the English Church and State in Addison's day, as they now conduct the affairs of the British Empire.

[2] Bentley's great work, establishing the true date of the Greek book of letters, falsely attributed to Phalaris, Tyrant of Sicily, 550 B.C.

[3] Jonathan Swift (1667–1745), Addison's friend and rival. See Introduction.

20. About thirty years before Gulliver's Travels appeared, Addison wrote these lines :

> " Jamque acies inter medias sese arduus infert
> Pygmeadum ductor, qui, majestate verendus,
> Incessuque gravis, reliquos supereminet omnes
> Mole gigantea, mediamque exsurgit in ulnam." [1]

21. The Latin poems of Addison were greatly and justly admired both at Oxford and Cambridge, before his name had ever been heard by the wits who thronged the coffee-houses round Drury Lane theatre.[2] In his twenty-second year, he ventured to appear before the public as a writer of English verse. He addressed some complimentary lines to Dryden,[3] who, after many triumphs and many reverses, had at length reached a secure and lonely eminence among the literary men of that age. Dryden appears to have been much gratified by the young scholar's praise ; and an interchange of civilities and good offices followed. Addison was probably introduced by Dryden to Congreve,[4] and

§§ 21–26. *English poetry of that day. Addison's first attempts.*

[1] " And now between the battle lines advances the lofty leader of the Pygmies, who, terrible in his majesty and solemn in step, o'ertops all the rest with his gigantic mass, and rises aloft to the height of one's elbow."

[2] In Addison's time the principal theatre of London, situated in the fashionable quarter, where Russell Street now is. It had been rebuilt after the great fire by Sir Christopher Wren. In the next generation, Garrick was the manager.

[3] John Dryden (1631–1700), another of the great men of Trinity College, where Macaulay was educated. Dryden's great translation of Virgil was published in 1697, but parts had previously appeared in 1693 in a magazine. It was upon the excellence of this work that Addison complimented him in a little poem; Dryden in return printed Addison's discourse on the *Georgics* of Virgil, as a preface to his own translation, and introduced him to his own publisher, Tonson, who thereafter employed him.

[4] William Congreve, the great writer of comedy at this time. See page 92.

was certainly presented by Congreve to Charles Montague,[1] who was then Chancellor of the Exchequer,[2] and leader of the Whig party[3] in the House of Commons.

22. At this time Addison seemed inclined to devote himself to poetry. He published a translation of part of the fourth Georgic,[4] Lines to King William,[5] and other performances of equal value, that is to say, of no value at all. But in those days, the public was in the habit of receiving with applause pieces which would now have little chance of obtaining the Newdigate prize or the Seatonian prize.[6] And the reason is obvious. The heroic couplet[7] was then the favourite measure. The art of arranging words in that

[1] Charles Montague, first Earl of Halifax (1661–1715), an English statesman, financier, and poet, one of the most brilliant of the graduates of Trinity, Cambridge. See Introduction.

[2] A name applied to that department of the government of Great Britain which has charge of all matters relating to the revenue. The head of it is called the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He is necessarily a member of the House of Commons, which alone can lay taxes, but is a most important member of the so-called Cabinet, being in charge of the government finance. The person here alluded to is Montague. The word "exchequer" is an old Norman name, derived from the chequered cloth which covered the original table where the officers of the Norman kings transacted the financial business of the court.

[3] The origin of this party name is variously given. It was applied to the party of liberal principles in England from about the time of Charles II. to the Reform Bill of 1832.

[4] *Georgics*, Virgil's four books on the art of agriculture.

[5] Addison's friends, Somers and Montague, persuaded him to write, in 1695, this piece of civility to the king, who being a most unpoetic monarch, took no notice of it whatever.

[6] Sir Roger Newdigate founded an annual prize at Oxford University for the best English poem. The Seaton prize is given for the same purpose at Cambridge. The standard of prize poems is proverbially not high, though Tennyson, Newman, and Heber took such prizes.

[7] Heroic couplet, a pair of ten syllable iambic lines, like this:

> "Achilles' wrath, to Greece the direful spring
> Of woes unnumbered, heavenly goddess, sing!"

measure, so that the lines may flow smoothly, that the accents may fall correctly, that the rhymes may strike the ear strongly, and that there may be a pause at the end of every distich, is an art as mechanical as that of mending a kettle or shoeing a horse, and may be learned by any human being who has sense enough to learn any thing. But, like other mechanical arts, it was gradually improved by means of many experiments and many failures. It was reserved for Pope to discover the trick, to make himself complete master of it, and to teach it to every body else. From the time when his Pastorals[1] appeared, heroic versification became matter of rule and compass; and, before long, all artists were on a level. Hundreds of dunces who never blundered on one happy thought or expression were able to write reams of couplets which, as far as euphony was concerned, could not be distinguished from those of Pope himself, and which very clever writers of the reign of Charles the Second, Rochester,[2] for example, or Marvel,[3] or Oldham,[4] would have contemplated with admiring despair.

23. Ben Jonson[5] was a great man, Hoole[6] a very small

[1] The first published poem of Alexander Pope (1688–1744). It appeared in Tonson's *Miscellanies*, in 1709.

[2] John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester (1647–1680), poet and courtier of Charles II., writer of witty verse. He is now best remembered for this epigram:

"Here lies our sovereign lord the king,
Whose word no man relies on;
Who never said a foolish thing,
And never did a wise one."

[3] Andrew Marvel or Marvell (1621–1678), Milton's friend and secretary, on the Parliamentary side. He wrote satires on Charles I. and an Horatian *Ode to Cromwell*.

[4] John Oldham (1653–1683), a writer of satires on the Jesuits. The writers of the Restoration affected wit and point rather than sentiment.

[5] Ben Jonson (1573–1637), Shakespeare's friend. He wrote chiefly plays, masques, and such entertainments.

[6] John Hoole (1727–1803), a rather mechanical maker of translations of Tasso, Ariosto, and other Italian poets.

man. But Hoole, coming after Pope, had learned how to manufacture decasyllable verses, and poured them forth by thousands and tens of thousands, all as well turned, as smooth, and as like each other as the blocks which have passed through Mr. Brunel's[1] mill in the dockyard at Portsmouth. Ben's heroic couplets resemble blocks rudely hewn out by an unpractised hand, with a blunt hatchet. Take as a specimen his translation of a celebrated passage in the Æneid :

> " This child our parent earth, stirr'd up with spite
> Of all the gods, brought forth, and, as some write,
> She was last sister of that giant race
> That sought to scale Jove's court, right swift of pace,
> And swifter far of wing, a monster vast
> And dreadful. Look, how many plumes are placed
> On her huge corpse, so many waking eyes
> Stick underneath, and, which may stranger rise
> In the report, as many tongues she wears." [2]

24. Compare with these jagged misshapen distichs the neat fabric which Hoole's machine produces in unlimited abundance. We take the first lines on which we open in his version of Tasso. They are neither better nor worse than the rest :

> " O thou, whoe'er thou art, whose steps are led,
> By choice or fate, these lonely shores to tread,
> No greater wonders east or west can boast
> Than yon small island on the pleasing coast.
> If e're thy sight would blissful scenes explore,
> The current pass, and seek the further shore."

25. Ever since the time of Pope there has been a glut of lines of this sort ; and we are now as little disposed to admire a man for being able to write them, as for being able to write

[1] Mark Isambard Brunel (1769–1849) made block-pulleys for ships in a mill at Portsmouth. He was a great engineer and mechanical genius.

[2] *Æneid*, Book IV., 178–183. The verses are from Jonson's *Poetaster*.

his name. But in the days of William the Third such versification was rare; and a rhymer who had any skill in it passed for a great poet, just as in the dark ages a person who could write his name passed for a great clerk. Accordingly, Duke, Stepney, Granville, Walsh,[1] and others whose only title to fame was that they said in tolerable metre what might have been as well said in prose, or what was not worth saying at all, were honoured with marks of distinction which ought to be reserved for genius. With these Addison must have ranked, if he had not earned true and lasting glory by performances which very little resembled his juvenile poems.

26. Dryden was now busied with Virgil, and obtained from Addison a critical preface to the Georgics. In return for this service, and for other services of the same kind, the veteran poet, in the postscript to the translation of the Æneid, complimented his young friend with great liberality, and indeed with more liberality than sincerity. He affected to be afraid that his own performance would not sustain a comparison with the version of the fourth Georgic, by "the most ingenious Mr. Addison of Oxford." "After his bees," added Dryden, "my latter swarm is scarcely worth the hiving."

27. The time had now arrived when it was necessary for Addison to choose a calling. Every thing seemed to point his course towards the clerical profession. His habits were regular, his opinions orthodox. His college had large ecclesiastical preferment[2] in its gift, and boasts that it has given at least one bishop to almost every see[3] in England.

§§ 27–28. *Circumstances which determined Addison's career. Comparison of England in 1697 with France in 1830.*

[1] A group of minor poets of the times of Charles II. and James II.

[2] In England, a place or office in the Church.

[3] See, a form of the word "seat," came to mean usually the seat of a bishop; hence the office and authority of a bishop, a bishopric.

Dr. Lancelot Addison held an honourable place in the Church, and had set his heart on seeing his son a clergyman. It is clear, from some expressions in the young man's rhymes, that his intention was to take orders.[1] But Charles Montague interfered. Montague had first brought himself into notice by verses, well timed and not contemptibly written, but never, we think, rising above mediocrity. Fortunately for himself and for his country, he early quitted poetry, in which he could never have attained a rank as high as that of Dorset[2] or Rochester, and turned his mind to official and parliamentary business. It is written that the ingenious person who undertook to instruct Rasselas,[3] prince of Abyssinia, in the art of flying, ascended an eminence, waved his wings, sprang into the air, and instantly dropped into the lake. But it is added that the wings, which were unable to support him through the sky, bore him up effectually as soon as he was in the water. This is no bad type of the fate of Charles Montague, and of men like him. When he attempted to soar into the regions of poetical invention, he altogether failed; but, as soon as he had descended from that ethereal elevation into a lower and grosser element, his talents instantly raised him above the mass. He became a distinguished financier, debater, courtier, and party leader. He still retained his fondness for the pursuits of his early days; but he showed that fondness not by wearying the public with his own feeble performances, but by discovering and encouraging literary excellence in others. A crowd of wits and poets, who

[1] Orders, again, has an ecclesiastical use,—the rank and degree of clergyman, "holy orders."

[2] Charles Sackville (1637–1706), Earl of Dorset, man of letters and poet. See Ward's *English Poets*.

[3] Johnson's romantic tale, published in 1759, describing the life of an imaginary Prince Rasselas, brought up in a "Happy Valley" of Abyssinia, shut off from the evils of this world.

would easily have vanquished him as a competitor, revered him as a judge and a patron. In his plans for the encouragement of learning, he was cordially supported by the ablest and most virtuous of his colleagues, the Lord Chancellor Somers.[1] Though both these great statesmen had a sincere love of letters, it was not solely from a love of letters that they were desirous to enlist youth of high intellectual qualifications in the public service. The Revolution had altered the whole system of government. Before that event the press had been controlled by censors,[2] and the Parliament had sat only two months in eight years. Now the press was free, and had begun to exercise unprecedented influence on the public mind. Parliament met annually and sat long. The chief power in the State had passed to the House of Commons. At such a conjuncture, it was natural that literary and oratorical talents should rise in value. There was danger that a Government which neglected such talents might be subverted by them. It was, therefore, a profound and enlightened policy which led Montague and Somers to attach such talents to the Whig party, by the strongest ties both of interest and of gratitude.

28. It is remarkable that in a neighbouring country, we have recently seen similar effects follow from similar causes. The Revolution of July, 1830, established representative

[1] John, Baron Somers (1652–1716), the great English jurist and statesman of the reigns of James II., William and Mary, and Anne. See Introduction.

[2] All over Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, regulations were in force whereby manuscripts, printed books, plays, and other publications were examined by officials, who suppressed any part or the whole of any writings obnoxious to the government. See the references to the *Areopagitica* in the *Essay on Milton*. This censorship was practically abolished in England in 1694 and in Germany in 1848; in Russia it still obtains. There has never been any censorship of the press in the United States.

government in France. The men of letters instantly rose to the highest importance in the state. At the present moment most of the persons whom we see at the head both of the Administration and of the Opposition have been Professors, Historians, Journalists, Poets.[1] The influence of the literary class in England, during the generation which followed the Revolution, was great, but by no means so great as it has lately been in France. For, in England, the aristocracy of intellect had to contend with a powerful and deeply rooted aristocracy of a very different kind. France has no Somersets[2] and Shrewsburies[3] to keep down her Addisons and Priors.

29. It was in the year 1699, when Addison had just completed his twenty-seventh year, that the course of his life was finally determined. Both the great chiefs of the Ministry were kindly disposed towards him. In political opinions he already was what he continued to be through life, a firm, though a moderate Whig. He had addressed the most polished and vigorous of his early English lines to Somers, and had dedicated to Montague a Latin poem,

§§ 29–34. *Addison's travels in France. His interview with Boileau. A discussion of modern Latin verse.*

[1] The revolution of 1830 was, so to speak, headed by newspaper men and writers; it was a revolution of the middle classes against the aristocracy. Some men of the literary type concerned in it were Thiers, Casimir Périer, Guizot, and Chateaubriand. It put upon the throne Louis Philippe as a sort of constitutional monarch. He was king of France at the date (1843) at which Macaulay was writing, but was driven out by the more democratic Revolution of 1848.

[2] Duke of Somerset, one of the great Tory nobles, who, however, assisted at the coronation of William and Mary.

[3] Charles Talbot (1660–1718), twelfth Earl and first and only Duke of Shrewsbury, one of the highest of the English nobles, who joined in the invitation of William to England. He held various offices of state under William and Anne, and in 1714, as Lord High Treasurer, secured the succession of the House of Hanover by proclaiming George I. King of England.

truly Virgilian, both in style and rhythm, on the peace of Ryswick.[1] The wish of the young poet's great friends was, it should seem, to employ him in the service of the crown abroad. But an intimate knowledge of the French language was a qualification indispensable to a diplomatist; and this qualification Addison had not acquired. It was, therefore, thought desirable that he should pass some time on the Continent in preparing himself for official employment. His own means were not such as would enable him to travel; but a pension of three hundred pounds a-year was procured for him by the interest of the Lord Chancellor.[2] It seems to have been apprehended that some difficulty might be started by the rulers of Magdalene College. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer wrote in the strongest terms to Hough. The State—such was the purport of Montague's letter—could not, at that time, spare to the Church such a man as Addison. Too many high civil posts were already occupied by adventurers, who, destitute of every liberal art and sentiment, at once pillaged and disgraced the country which they pretended to serve. It had become necessary to recruit for the public service from a very different class, from that class of which Addison was the representative. The close of the Minister's letter was remarkable. "I am called," he said, "an enemy of the Church. But I will never do it any other injury than keeping Mr. Addison out of it."

30. This interference was successful; and, in the summer of 1699, Addison, made a rich man by his pension,

[1] Between Louis XIV. and the Allies, in 1697.

[2] In Great Britain the highest law officer of the Crown. The word originally meant one who stood at the chancel, or railing round the throne of an emperor, to keep order among the suitors and who cared for the sealing and signing of decrees. Out of this office developed the great officials of church and state called chancellors. The chancellor here referred to is of course Somers.

and still retaining his fellowship, quitted his beloved Oxford, and set out on his travels. He crossed from Dover to Calais, proceeded to Paris, and was received there with great kindness and politeness by a kinsman of his friend Montague, Charles Earl of Manchester, who had just been appointed Ambassador to the Court of France. The Countess, a Whig and a toast,[1] was probably as gracious as her lord; for Addison long retained an agreeable recollection of the impression which she at this time made on him, and, in some lively lines written on the glasses of the Kit Cat[2] Club, described the envy which her cheeks, glowing with the genuine bloom of England, had excited among the painted beauties of Versailles.

31. Lewis the Fourteenth[3] was at this time expiating the vices of his youth by a devotion which had no root in reason, and bore no fruit of charity. The servile literature of France had changed its character to suit the changed character of the prince. No book appeared that had not an air of sanctity. Racine,[4] who was just dead, had passed the close of his life in writing sacred dramas; and Dacier[5] was seeking for the Athanasian[6] mysteries in

[1] A person whose health is drunk (see *Tatler*, No. 24), especially a woman.

[2] The Kit Cat Club flourished from 1703 to 1733. Its meetings were held at the "Cat and Fiddle," an inn kept by Christopher Cat. The *Spectator* (No. 9) derives the name of the club from the mutton-pies, there called "kitcats." Steele, Addison, Oxford, and other clever people were members, including most of the chiefs of the Whig party. The corresponding Tory club was called the "October."

[3] For Louis XIV., see Introduction.

[4] Racine (1639–1699), the classic French poet. Among his most celebrated pieces are *Andromaque*, *Iphigénie*, *Phèdre* (from Greek subjects), and at this time of piety, two from the Bible, *Esther* and *Athalie*.

[5] Dacier (1651–1722), a French classical scholar, translator of Plato, Horace, Aristotle, etc.

[6] Saint Athanasius (296–373 A.D.) secured by his eloquence and zeal,

Plato. Addison described this state of things in a short but lively and graceful letter to Montague. Another letter, written about the same time to the Lord Chancellor, conveyed the strongest assurances of gratitude and attachment. "The only return I can make to your Lordship," said Addison, "will be to apply myself entirely to my business." With this view he quitted Paris and repaired to Blois, a place where it was supposed that the French language was spoken in its highest purity, and where not a single Englishman could be found. Here he passed some months pleasantly and profitably. Of his way of life at Blois, one of his associates, an Abbé[1] named Philippeaux, gave an account to Joseph Spence.[2] If this account is to be trusted, Addison studied much, mused much, talked little, had fits of absence, and either had no love affairs, or was too discreet to confide them to the Abbé. A man who, even when surrounded by fellow countrymen and fellow students, had always been remarkably shy and silent, was not likely to be loquacious in a foreign tongue, and among foreign companions. But it is clear from Addison's letters, some of which were long after published in the Guardian,[3] that, while he appeared to be absorbed in his own meditations, he was really observing French society with that keen and sly, yet not ill-natured side glance, which was peculiarly his own.

though often at the risk of his own life, the adoption of the Nicene creed, both at the General Council of Nicea (325 A.D.) and elsewhere. Hence his name is associated with all Trinitarian doctrine.

[1] This word was originally the French for Abbot, the head of a monastery; it then became a title for any person enjoying the revenues of a monastery, and finally was assumed by persons who had studied theology, practised celibacy, and wore a peculiar dress, but had not, strictly speaking, any formal connection with the church, figuring chiefly as private tutors in great houses.

[2] Joseph Spence (1699–1768) published a very interesting book of anecdotes of great writers. He was professor of poetry at Oxford.

[3] Nos. 101 and 104.

32. From Blois he returned to Paris; and, having now mastered the French language, found great pleasure in the society of French philosophers and poets. He gave an account, in a letter to Bishop Hough, of two highly interesting conversations, one with Malbranche,[1] the other with Boileau.[2] Malbranche expressed great partiality for the English, and extolled the genius of Newton, but shook his head when Hobbes[3] was mentioned, and was indeed so unjust as to call the author of the Leviathan a poor silly creature. Addison's modesty restrained him from fully relating, in his letter, the circumstances of his introduction to Boileau. Boileau, having survived the friends and rivals of his youth, old, deaf, and melancholy, lived in retirement, seldom went either to Court or to the Academy,[4] and was almost inaccessible to strangers. Of the English and of English literature he knew nothing. He had hardly heard the name of Dryden. Some of our countrymen, in the warmth of their patriotism, have asserted that this ignorance must have been affected. We own that we see no ground for such a supposition. English literature was to the French of the age of Lewis the Fourteenth what German literature was to our own grandfathers. Very few, we suspect, of the accomplished men who, sixty or

[1] A French metaphysician (1638-1715) teaching a philosophic pantheism, expressed in the most beautiful French style. His great work is *Recherche de la Vérité.*

[2] Nicolas Boileau (1636-1711), a famous French critic and poet. He wrote a series of satires and a book called *L'Art Poétique*, which was the foundation of the literary criticism in France of his day, and which exercised great influence on the English taste also.

[3] Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), an English philosopher, author of the *Leviathan*, which showed that the power of the state is absolute against the individual, as the leviathan swallows all other animals. It is a quaint name for a powerful book on social questions.

[4] The French Academy was founded in 1635 by Richelieu. It is a learned society, chiefly employed as the official guardian of the French language and literature.

seventy years ago, used to dine in Leicester Square with Sir Joshua,[1] or at Streatham with Mrs. Thrale,[2] had the slightest notion that Wieland[3] was one of the first wits and poets, and Lessing,[4] beyond all dispute, the first critic in Europe. Boileau knew just as little about the Paradise Lost, and about Absalom and Ahitophel[5]; but he had read Addison's Latin poems, and admired them greatly. They had given him, he said, quite a new notion of the state of learning and taste among the English. Johnson will have it that these praises were insincere. "Nothing," says he, "is better known of Boileau than that he had an injudicious and peevish contempt of modern Latin; and therefore his profession of regard was probably the effect of his civility rather than approbation." Now, nothing is better known of Boileau than that he was singularly sparing of compliments. We do not remember that either friendship or fear ever induced him to bestow praise on any composition which he did not approve. On literary questions, his caustic, disdainful, and self-confident spirit rebelled against that authority to which everything else in France bowed down. He had the spirit to tell Lewis the Fourteenth firmly and even rudely, that his Majesty knew nothing about poetry, and admired verses which were de-

[1] Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792), the great English painter. He was the friend of Johnson, Burke, Garrick, and Goldsmith, who are here alluded to.

[2] Mrs. Thrale (1741–1821), an educated English lady, the friend of these same eminent men and particularly intimate with Johnson. See Macaulay's *Life of Johnson*.

[3] Wieland (1733–1813), a German poet and professor. His best known poem is called *Oberon*.

[4] Lessing (1729–1781), a German dramatist and critic. His great work was done in criticism of the drama; but his best known book, *Laocoon*, is a treatise on fine art. His plays, *Nathan der Weise*, *Emilia Galotti*, etc., are also famous.

[5] A great political satire of Dryden's.

testable. What was there in Addison's position that could induce the satirist, whose stern and fastidious temper had been the dread of two generations, to turn sycophant for the first and last time? Nor was Boileau's contempt of modern Latin either injudicious or peevish. He thought, indeed, that no poem of the first order would ever be written in a dead language. And did he think amiss? Has not the experience of centuries confirmed his opinion? Boileau also thought it probable that, in the best modern Latin, a writer of the Augustan age would have detected ludicrous improprieties. And who can think otherwise? What modern scholar can honestly declare that he sees the smallest impurity in the style of Livy? Yet is it not certain that, in the style of Livy, Pollio,[1] whose taste had been formed on the banks of the Tiber, detected the inelegant idiom of the Po? Has any modern scholar understood Latin better than Frederic the Great[2] understood French? Yet is it not notorious that Frederic the Great, after reading, speaking, writing French, and nothing but French, during more than half a century, after unlearning his mother tongue in order to learn French, after living familiarly during many years with French associates, could not, to the last, compose in French, without imminent risk of committing some mistake which would have moved a smile in the literary circles of Paris? Do we believe that

[1] C. Asinius Pollio (76 B.C.–6 A.D.), a Roman politician of the party of Cæsar and Antony, a friend of Virgil and Horace, and an important Latin author. He wrote a history of the Civil War. This remark of his about Livy's "Patavinity," *i.e.*, his use of a Latin such as they spoke in Patavium or Padua, where Livy was born, has interested modern scholars. He refers probably to Livy's romantic turn for strong and picturesque rather than accepted and elegant phrases, as one might mention a Scotch poetic flavor in an English author.

[2] Frederic the Second of Prussia (1712–1786). See Carlyle's *Life*, and Macaulay's *Essay on Frederick the Great*.

Erasmus[1] and Fracastorius[2] wrote Latin as well as Dr. Robertson[3] and Sir Walter Scott wrote English? And are there not in the Dissertation on India, the last of Dr. Robertson's works, in Waverley, in Marmion, Scotticisms at which a London apprentice would laugh? But does it follow, because we think thus, that we can find nothing to admire in the noble alcaics[4] of Gray,[5] or in the playful elegiacs[4] of Vincent Bourne?[6] Surely not. Nor was Boileau so ignorant or tasteless as to be incapable of appreciating good modern Latin. In the very letter to which Johnson alludes, Boileau says—"Ne croyez pas pourtant que je veuille par là blâmer les vers Latins que vous m'avez envoyés d'un de vos illustres académiciens. Je les ai trouvés fort beaux, et dignes de Vida[7] et de Sannazar,[8] mais non pas d'Horace et de Virgile."[9] Several

[1] Erasmus (1465–1536), the Dutch scholar. His great writings are the *Colloquies* and *Encomium Moriæ*.

[2] Fracastorius (1483–1553), a learned Italian.

[3] William Robertson (1721–1793), a Scotch historian. His greatest work is his well known *History of Charles V.*

[4] The measures invented by the Greek poet Alcæus are called Alcaics. Horace used them frequently. See Tennyson's poem on Milton. Elegiac verse is composed of couplets, containing one hexameter line and one pentameter line. It was much used by classic poets for love-songs and lamentations. See Coleridge for a model:

> "In the hexameter rises the fountain's silvery column;
> In the pentameter aye falling in melody back."

[5] Thomas Gray (1716–1771), scholar and professor of history at Cambridge. He refused to be made "poet laureate." His letters are very good reading, as well as his better known poetry.

[6] An English writer of Latin verse in the eighteenth century. He was a teacher in Westminster School, and chiefly remembered as the instructor of the poet Cowper.

[7] Vida (1480-1566), an Italian writer of Latin poetry.

[8] Sannazaro (1458–1530), an Italian of Spanish descent, father of the modern pastoral.

[9] "Do not think, however, that I would wish to criticise unfavorably

poems, in modern Latin, have been praised by Boileau quite as liberally as it was his habit to praise anything. He says, for example, of the Père Fraguier's[1] epigrams, that Catullus seems to have come to life again. But the best proof that Boileau did not feel the undiscerning contempt for modern Latin verses which has been imputed to him, is, that he wrote and published Latin verses in several metres. Indeed it happens, curiously enough, that the most severe censure ever pronounced by him on modern Latin is conveyed in Latin hexameters. We allude to the fragment which begins—

> "Quid numeris iterum me balbutire Latinis,
> Longe Alpes citra natum de patre Sicambro,
> Musa, Jubes?"[2]

33. For these reasons we feel assured that the praise which Boileau bestowed on the *Machinæ Gesticulantes*,[3] and the *Gerano-Pygmæomachia*,[4] was sincere. He certainly opened himself to Addison with a freedom which was a sure indication of esteem. Literature was the chief subject of conversation. The old man talked on his favourite theme much and well, indeed, as his young hearer thought, incomparably well. Boileau had undoubtedly some of the qualities of a great critic. He wanted imagination; but he had strong sense. His literary code was formed on narrow principles; but in applying it, he showed great judgment and penetration. In mere style, abstracted from the ideas of which style is the

the Latin verses you have sent me of one of your illustrious Academicians. I have found them very pretty, and worthy of Vida and Sannazaro, but not of Horace and Virgil."

[1] Fraguier (1666–1728), a French Jesuit.

[2] "Why do you ask me again, O Muse, to stammer in Latin measures, me the son of a Sigambrian father, born far beyond the Alps."

[3] "Puppet Shows."

[4] "The Battle of the Pygmies and Cranes."

garb, his taste was excellent. He was well acquainted with the great Greek writers; and, though unable fully to appreciate their creative genius, admired the majestic simplicity of their manner, and had learned from them to despise bombast and tinsel. It is easy, we think, to discover, in the Spectator and the Guardian, traces of the influence, in part salutary and in part pernicious, which the mind of Boileau had on the mind of Addison.

34. While Addison was at Paris, an event took place which made that capital a disagreeable residence for an Englishman and a Whig. Charles, second of the name, King of Spain, died; and bequeathed his dominions to Philip, Duke of Anjou, a younger son of the Dauphin. The King of France, in direct violation of his engagements both with Great Britain and with the States General,[1] accepted the bequest on behalf of his grandson. The house of Bourbon was at the summit of human grandeur. England had been outwitted, and found herself in a situation at once degrading and perilous. The people of France, not presaging the calamities by which they were destined to expiate the perfidy of their sovereign, went mad with pride and delight. Every man looked as if a great estate had just been left him. "The French conversation," said Addison, "begins to grow insupportable; that which was before the vainest nation in the world is now worse than ever." Sick of the arrogant exultation of the Parisians, and probably foreseeing that the peace between France and England could not be of long duration, he set off for Italy.

35. In December, 1700,[2] he embarked at Marseilles.

§§ 35–41. *Addison's travels in Italy.*

[1] The representative assembly of the seven provinces of the Dutch Republic.

[2] It is strange that Addison should, in the first line of his travels, have misdated his departure from Marseilles by a whole year, and still

As he glided along the Ligurian[1] coast, he was delighted by the sight of myrtles and olive trees, which retained their verdure under the winter solstice. Soon, however, he encountered one of the black storms of the Mediterranean. The captain of the ship gave up all for lost, and confessed himself to a capuchin[2] who happened to be on board. The English heretic,[3] in the mean time, fortified himself against the terrors of death with devotions of a very different kind. How strong an impression this perilous voyage made on him, appears from the ode, "How are thy servants blest, O Lord!" which was long after published in the Spectator. After some days of discomfort and danger, Addison was glad to land at Savona, and to make his way, over mountains where no road had yet been hewn out by art, to the city of Genoa.

36. At Genoa, still ruled by her own Doge,[4] and by the nobles whose names were inscribed on her Book of Gold,[5] Addison made a short stay. He admired the narrow streets overhung by long lines of towering palaces, the walls rich with frescoes,[6] the gorgeous temple of the Annunciation, and the tapestries whereon were recorded the long glories of

more strange that this slip of the pen, which throws the whole narrative into inextricable confusion, should have been repeated in a succession of editions and never detected by Tickell or by Hurd. [*Macaulay's note.*]

[1] Liguria, the country south of the maritime Alps in the northwest corner of Italy. Modern Nice, Mentone, Genoa, and the Riviera in general represent the Ligurian coast.

[2] Capuchin, an order of monks, named from their peculiar cowl.

[3] Heretic, one who holds religious opinions contrary to the established belief. In Italy, all Protestants must be heretics.

[4] An Italian form of the word "duke;" the title of the chief magistrates of Genoa as well as of Venice. They were at first elected for life by the republic, afterwards for two years only.

[5] The list of the nobility, old and new, from whom the governors might be taken.

[6] Fresco, a painting on walls covered with plaster. The word is

the house of Doria.[1] Thence he hastened to Milan, where he contemplated the Gothic magnificence of the cathedral[2] with more wonder than pleasure. He passed Lake Benacus[3] while a gale was blowing, and saw the waves raging as they raged when Virgil looked upon them. At Venice, then the gayest spot in Europe, the traveller spent the Carnival,[4] the gayest season of the year, in the midst of masques,[5] dances, and serenades. Here he was at once diverted and provoked, by the absurd dramatic pieces which then disgraced the Italian stage. To one of those pieces, however, he was indebted for a valuable hint. He was present when a ridiculous play on the death of Cato[6] was performed. Cato, it seems, was in love with a daughter of Scipio. The lady had given her heart to Cæsar. The rejected lover determined to destroy himself. He appeared seated in his library, a dagger in his hand, a Plutarch and a Tasso before him; and, in this position, he pronounced a soliloquy before he struck the blow. We are surprised that so remarkable a circumstance as this should have escaped the notice of all Addison's biographers. There cannot, we conceive, be the smallest doubt that this scene, in spite of its absurdities and anachronisms,[7] struck the trav-

strictly applicable only to the process of painting in colors on wet plaster which dries with the color. But it is now used of all wall painting.

[1] Andrea Doria, the liberator of Genoa from French dominion in 1528, and founder of the republic, which lasted till this century.

[2] Addison's opinion of the cathedral is perfectly just.

[3] The Lago di Garda.

[4] Carnival, the season of rejoicing before Lent begins, observed in Catholic countries.

[5] Any festive entertainment where the performers wore masks. See *Essay on Milton*, § 28.

[6] Marcus Porcius Cato, the patriotic opponent of Cæsar, who committed suicide when he heard of Cæsar's victory at Thapsus. The death of this hero was also the subject of Addison's drama.

[7] *I.e.*, with regard to Plutarch and Tasso.

eller's imagination, and suggested to him the thought of bringing Cato on the English stage. It is well known that about this time he began his tragedy, and that he finished the first four acts before he returned to England.

37. On his way from Venice to Rome, he was drawn some miles out of the beaten road, by a wish to see the smallest independent state in Europe. On a rock where the snow still lay, though the Italian spring was now far advanced, was perched the little fortress of San Marino.[1] The roads which led to the secluded town were so bad that few travellers had ever visited it, and none had ever published an account of it. Addison could not suppress a good-natured smile at the simple manners and institutions of this singular community. But he observed, with the exultation of a Whig, that the rude mountain tract which formed the territory of the republic swarmed with an honest, healthy, and contented peasantry, while the rich plain which surrounded the metropolis of civil and spiritual tyranny[2] was scarcely less desolate than the uncleared wilds of America.

38. At Rome Addison remained on his first visit only long enough to catch a glimpse of St. Peter's[3] and of the Pantheon.[4] His haste is the more extraordinary because the Holy Week[5] was close at hand. He has given no hint which can enable us to pronounce why he chose to fly from

[1] A republic, now fifteen hundred years old, of thirty-two square miles, with a population of six thousand.

[2] Rome.

[3] St. Peter's, the cathedral church of the Roman see. Built according to Michael Angelo's designs in the sixteenth century and dedicated in 1626.

[4] Pantheon, a building at Rome constructed by Agrippa in 27 B.C. in honor of the Julian family. It is now a Christian church. The interior is lighted entirely by a circular opening in the roof, and the walls are encrusted with marble.

[5] The week before Easter.

a spectacle which every year allures from distant regions persons of far less taste and sensibility than his. Possibly, travelling, as he did, at the charge of a Government distinguished by its enmity to the Church of Rome, he may have thought that it would be imprudent in him to assist at the most magnificent rite[1] of that Church. Many eyes would be upon him; and he might find it difficult to behave in such a manner as to give offence neither to his patrons in England, nor to those among whom he resided. Whatever his motives may have been, he turned his back on the most august and affecting ceremony which is known among men, and posted[2] along the Appian[3] way to Naples.

39. Naples was then destitute of what are now, perhaps, its chief attractions. The lovely bay and the awful mountain were indeed there. But a farmhouse stood on the theatre of Herculaneum,[4] and rows of vines grew over the streets of Pompeii.[5] The temples of Pæstum[6] had not indeed been hidden from the eye of man by any great convulsion of nature; but, strange to say, their existence was a secret even to artists and antiquaries. Though situated within a few hours' journey of a great capital, where Sal-

[1] This refers to the Easter masses at St. Peter's.

[2] *I.e.*, travelled by post-horses.

[3] The Roman road, running from Rome to Brundusium, begun and named by Appius Claudius (312 B.C.). Near Rome it is lined with tombs and other memorials of antiquity.

[4] Herculaneum, an ancient city of Campania, south of Naples, directly at the foot of Vesuvius. It was entirely covered by the eruption of 79 A.D. with lava and ashes; it was rediscovered in 1709, by a farmer sinking a well.

[5] Pompeii, a much larger town, was first found in 1748. Excavations were, however, never regularly or properly conducted till this century.

[6] Pæstum, an ancient city of Lucania, south of Naples. It was not known to modern scholars till 1745.

vator[1] had not long before painted, and where Vico[2] was then lecturing, those noble remains were as little known to Europe as the ruined cities overgrown by the forests of Yucatan.[3] What was to be seen at Naples, Addison saw. He climbed Vesuvius, explored the tunnel of Posilipo,[4] and wandered among the vines and almond trees of Capreæ.[5] But neither the wonders of nature, nor those of art, could so occupy his attention as to prevent him from noticing, though cursorily, the abuses of the government and the misery of the people. The great kingdom which had just descended to Philip the Fifth,[6] was in a state of paralytic dotage. Even Castile and Aragon were sunk in wretchedness. Yet, compared with the Italian dependencies of the Spanish crown, Castile and Aragon might be called prosperous. It is clear that all the observations which Addison made in Italy tended to confirm him in the political opinions which he had adopted at home. To the last, he always spoke of foreign travel as the best cure for Jacobitism.[7] In his Freeholder,[8] the Tory fox-hunter asks what travelling is good for, except to teach a man to jabber French, and to talk against passive obedience.

40. From Naples, Addison returned to Rome by sea, along the coast which his favourite Virgil had celebrated.

[1] Salvator Rosa (1615–1673), a painter of Naples, fond of picturesque and romantic subjects.

[2] Vico (1668–1744), an Italian jurist and professor at Naples.

[3] Yucatan was once the home of the Mayas, a race who reached a high state of civilization, and left cities full of interesting architecture not yet thoroughly explored or understood.

[4] Posilipo, a famous cave near Naples.

[5] Capreæ, or Capri, a beautiful island in the bay of Naples.

[6] See Macaulay's essay on the *War of the Succession*.

[7] Support of the Stuart family, whose heir was James III.

[8] See § 130.

The felucca[1] passed the headland where the oar and trumpet were placed by the Trojan adventurers on the tomb of Misenus,[2] and anchored at night under the shelter of the fabled promontory of Circe.[3] The voyage ended in the Tiber, still overhung with dark verdure, and still turbid with yellow sand, as when it met the eyes of Æneas. From the ruined port of Ostia, the stranger hurried to Rome; and at Rome he remained during those hot and sickly months when, even in the Augustan age, all who could make their escape fled from mad dogs and from streets black with funerals, to gather the first figs of the season in the country.[4] It is probable that, when he, long after, poured forth in verse his gratitude to the Providence which had enabled him to breathe unhurt in tainted air, he was thinking of the August and September which he passed at Rome.

41. It was not till the latter end of October that he tore himself away from the masterpieces of ancient and modern art which are collected in the city so long the mistress of the world. He then journeyed northward, passed through Sienna, and for a moment forgot his prejudices in favour of classic architecture as he looked on the magnificent cathedral. At Florence he spent some days with the Duke of Shrewsbury, who, cloyed with the pleasures of ambition, and impatient of its pains, fearing both parties, and loving neither, had determined to hide in an Italian retreat talents and accomplishments which, if they had been united with fixed principles and civil courage, might have

[1] A long, narrow vessel with two masts, rigged with lateen sails, and capable also of being rowed, used in the Mediterranean.

[2] See Virgil's *Æneid*, book VI., 234. Æneas's trumpeter was buried on the headland of Misenum.

[3] Circe, the goddess whose potions transformed wayfarers into beasts. See *Odyssey*, X, and *Æneid*, VII., 1-24.

[4] This is a description by Juvenal of summer in Rome.

made him the foremost man of his age. These days, we are told, passed pleasantly; and we can easily believe it. For Addison was a delightful companion when he was at his ease; and the Duke, though he seldom forgot that he was a Talbot, had the invaluable art of putting at ease all who came near him.

42. Addison gave some time to Florence,[1] and especially to the sculptures in the Museum, which he preferred even to those of the Vatican. He then pursued his journey through a country in which the ravages of the last war were still discernible, and in which all men were looking forward with dread to a still fiercer conflict. Eugene[2] had already descended from the Rhætian Alps, to dispute with Catinat the rich plain of Lombardy. The faithless ruler of Savoy[3] was still reckoned among the allies of Lewis. England had not yet actually declared war against France: but Manchester had left Paris; and the negotiations which produced the Grand Alliance[4] against the House of Bourbon were in progress. Under such circumstances, it was desirable for an English traveller to reach neutral ground without delay. Addison resolved to cross Mont Cenis.[5] It was December; and the road was very different from that which now reminds the stranger of the power and genius of Napoleon. The winter, however, was mild; and

§§ 42-46. *Crosses the Alps. Change of ministry in England. Loss of pension.*

[1] The most beautiful town in North Italy. The sculptures in the Uffizzi Museum include the Venus de Medici, the Wrestlers, and a large number of portrait statues of Romans.

[2] See Introduction.

[3] Victor Amadeus II. (1666-1732), first king of Sardinia. See Introduction.

[4] The alliance against Louis XIV. of England, Holland, Austria, and other powers.

[5] Mont Cenis, now penetrated by the long railway tunnel leading to France and crossed by the splendid military road of Napoleon.

the passage was, for those times, easy. To this journey Addison alluded when, in the ode which we have already quoted, he said that for him the Divine goodness had warmed the hoary Alpine hills.[1]

43. It was in the midst of the eternal snow that he composed his Epistle to his friend Montague, now Lord Halifax. That Epistle, once widely renowned, is now known only to curious readers, and will hardly be considered by those to whom it is known as in any perceptible degree heightening Addison's fame. It is, however, decidedly superior to any English composition which he had previously published. Nay, we think it quite as good as any poem in heroic metre which appeared during the interval between the death of Dryden and the publication of the Essay on Criticism.[2] It contains passages as good as the second-rate passages of Pope, and would have added to the reputation of Parnell[3] or Prior.[4]

44. But, whatever be the literary merits or defects of the Epistle, it undoubtedly does honour to the principles and spirit of the author. Halifax had now nothing to give. He had fallen from power, had been held up to obloquy, had been impeached by the House of Commons, and, though his Peers had dismissed the impeachment, had, as it seemed, little chance of ever again filling high office. The Epistle, written at such a time, is one among many proofs that there was no mixture of cowardice or meanness in the suavity and moderation which distinguished Addison from all the other public men of those stormy times.

[1] See above, § 35.

[2] Pope's famous poem appeared in 1711.

[3] Thomas Parnell (1679–1711), an Irish poet.

[4] Matthew Prior (1664–1721), like Addison a poet and a diplomatist, but of the opposite party. He was a friend of Montague, with whom he wrote the poem called *The Country Mouse and City Mouse*.

45. At Geneva, the traveller learned that a partial change of ministry had taken place in England, and that the Earl of Manchester had become Secretary of State.[1] Manchester exerted himself to serve his young friend. It was thought advisable that an English agent should be near the person of Eugene in Italy; and Addison, whose diplomatic education was now finished, was the man selected. He was preparing to enter on his honourable functions, when all his prospects were for a time darkened by the death of William the Third.[2]

46. Anne[3] had long felt a strong aversion, personal, political, and religious, to the Whig party. That aversion appeared in the first measures of her reign. Manchester was deprived of the seals, after he had held them only a few weeks. Neither Somers nor Halifax was sworn of the Privy Council.[4] Addison shared the fate of his three patrons. His hopes of employment in the public service were at an end; his pension was stopped; and it was necessary for him to support himself by his own exertions. He became tutor to a young English traveller,[5] and appears to have rambled with his pupil over great part of Switzerland and Germany. At this time he wrote his pleasing treatise on Medals. It was not published till after his death; but

[1] One of the officers of state who manage the departments of the government. There are now five: the home, foreign, colonial, war, and Indian secretaries. Manchester had been ambassador. See § 30.

[2] In 1702.

[3] See Introduction.

[4] The body of advisers of the English sovereign has borne this name since the fifteenth century. The cabinet of modern days is simply a little committee of this privy council, though it has now become the governing body of England, responsible to Parliament only.

[5] There was a rather interesting correspondence between Addison and the Duke of Somerset, who wished to employ him as tutor to his son, Lord Hertford. But where he was, and what pupils he had in this period, is uncertain.

several distinguished scholars saw the manuscript, and gave just praise to the grace of the style, and to the learning and ingenuity evinced by the quotations.

47. From Germany Addison repaired to Holland, where he learned the melancholy news of his father's death. After passing some months in the United Provinces,[1] he returned about the close of the year 1703 to England. He was there cordially received by his friends, and introduced by them into the Kit Cat Club, a society in which were collected all the various talents and accomplishments which then gave lustre to the Whig party.

48. Addison was, during some months after his return from the Continent, hard pressed by pecuniary difficulties. But it was soon in the power of his noble patrons to serve him effectually. A political change, silent and gradual, but of the highest importance, was in daily progress. The accession of Anne had been hailed by the Tories with transports of joy and hope; and for a time it seemed that the Whigs had fallen never to rise again. The throne was surrounded by men supposed to be attached to the prerogative[2] and to the Church; and among these none stood so high in the favour of the sovereign as the Lord Treasurer Godolphin[3] and the Captain General Marlborough.

49. The country gentlemen and country clergymen had fully expected that the policy of these ministers would be directly opposed to that which had been almost constantly followed by William; that the landed interest[4] would be

§§ 47–60. *Return to England. Blenheim. The Campaign. Travels in Italy, and Rosamund.*

[1] The seven provinces of the Low Country, now the Kingdom of Holland, formed a league in 1579, which became the Dutch Republic.

[2] Prerogative, privileges belonging to the sovereign, subject to no interference from law. See *Essay on Milton*, § 57.

[3] For Godolphin, see Introduction.

[4] That is, owners of land, landlords.

favoured at the expense of trade; that no addition would be made to the funded debt,[1] that the privileges conceded to Dissenters[2] by the late King would be curtailed, if not withdrawn; that the war with France, if there must be such a war, would, on our part, be almost entirely naval; and that the Government would avoid close connections with foreign powers, and, above all, with Holland.

50. But the country gentlemen and country clergymen were fated to be deceived, not for the last time. The prejudices and passions which raged without control in vicarages, in cathedral closes, and in the manor-houses of foxhunting squires, were not shared by the chiefs of the ministry. Those statesmen saw that it was both for the public interest, and for their own interest, to adopt a Whig policy, at least as respected the alliances of the country and the conduct of the war. But, if the foreign policy of the Whigs were adopted, it was impossible to abstain from adopting also their financial policy. The natural consequences followed. The rigid Tories were alienated from the Government. The votes of the Whigs became necessary to it. The votes of the Whigs could be secured only by further concessions; and further concessions the Queen was induced to make.

51. At the beginning of the year 1704, the state of parties bore a close analogy to the state of parties in 1826. In 1826, as in 1704, there was a Tory ministry divided into two hostile sections. The position of Mr. Canning[3] and

[1] The national or public debt, created by Montague.

[2] Dissenters, those who disagree with the Church of England about the church-government and ritual, and do not attend the services of the established church.

[3] George Canning (1770–1827), a celebrated English statesman of the Tory party, who acted with the more liberal section of that party in the early part of this century, especially in the foreign relations of England.

his friends in 1826 corresponded to that which Marlborough and Godolphin occupied in 1704. Nottingham[1] and Jersey,[1] were, in 1704, what Lord Eldon[2] and Lord Westmoreland were in 1826. The Whigs of 1704 were in a situation resembling that in which the Whigs of 1826 stood. In 1704, Somers, Halifax, Sunderland, Cowper,[3] were not in office. There was no avowed coalition between them and the moderate Tories. It is probable that no direct communication tending to such a coalition had yet taken place; yet all men saw that such a coalition was inevitable, nay, that it was already half formed. Such, or nearly such, was the state of things when tidings arrived of the great battle fought at Blenheim on the 13th August, 1704. By the Whigs the news was hailed with transports of joy and pride. No fault, no cause of quarrel, could be remembered by them against the Commander whose genius had, in one day, changed the face of Europe, saved the Imperial throne,[4] humbled the House of Bourbon, and secured the Act of Settlement[5] against foreign hostility. The feeling of the Tories was very different. They could not indeed, without imprudence, openly express regret at an event so glorious to their country; but their congratulations were so cold and sullen as to give deep disgust to the victorious general and his friends.

52. Godolphin was not a reading man. Whatever time he could spare from business he was in the habit of spending at Newmarket[6] or at the card table. But he was not

[1] Thomas Finch, Earl of Nottingham (1647–1730), though a Tory, acted with the Whigs during the Revolution of 1688. Villiers, Earl of Jersey (1656–1711), did the same.

[2] Eldon (1751–1838), the great lord chancellor.

[3] For Halifax, etc., see Introduction.

[4] That of the Holy Roman Empire.

[5] The Act of Parliament settling the Crown of England on the House of Hanover.

[6] A fashionable racecourse.

absolutely indifferent to poetry; and he was too intelligent an observer not to perceive that literature was a formidable engine of political warfare, and that the great Whig leaders had strengthened their party, and raised their character, by extending a liberal and judicious patronage to good writers. He was mortified, and not without reason, by the exceeding badness of the poems which appeared in honour of the battle of Blenheim. One of these poems has been rescued from oblivion by the exquisite absurdity of three lines.

> "Think of two thousand gentlemen at least,
> And each man mounted on his capering beast;
> Into the Danube they were pushed by shoals."

53. Where to procure better verses the Treasurer did not know. He understood how to negotiate a loan, or remit a subsidy: he was also well versed in the history of running horses and fighting cocks; but his acquaintance among the poets was very small. He consulted Halifax; but Halifax affected to decline the office of adviser. He had, he said, done his best, when he had power, to encourage men whose abilities and acquirements might do honour to their country. Those times were over. Other maxims had prevailed. Merit was suffered to pine in obscurity; and the public money was squandered on the undeserving. "I do know," he added, "a gentleman who would celebrate the battle in a manner worthy of the subject: but I will not name him." Godolphin, who was expert at the soft answer which turneth away wrath, and who was under the necessity of paying court to the Whigs, gently replied that there was too much ground for Halifax's complaints, but that what was amiss should in time be rectified, and that in the mean time the services of a man such as Halifax had described should be liberally rewarded. Halifax then mentioned Addison, but, mindful of the dignity as well as of the pecuniary interest of his friend, insisted that the Minister should apply in

the most courteous manner to Addison himself; and this Godolphin promised to do.

54. Addison then occupied a garret up three pair of stairs, over a small shop in the Haymarket.[1] In this humble lodging he was surprised, on the morning which followed the conversation between Godolphin and Halifax, by a visit from no less a person than the Right Honourable Henry Boyle, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, and afterwards Lord Carleton.[2] This highborn minister had been sent by the Lord Treasurer as ambassador to the needy poet. Addison readily undertook the proposed task, a task which, to so good a Whig, was probably a pleasure. When the poem was little more than half finished, he showed it to Godolphin, who was delighted with it, and particularly with the famous similitude of the Angel. Addison was instantly appointed to a Commissionership[3] worth about two hundred pounds a year, and was assured that this appointment was only an earnest of greater favours.

55. The Campaign came forth, and was as much admired by the public as by the Minister. It pleases us less on the whole than the Epistle to Halifax. Yet it undoubtedly ranks high among the poems which appeared during the interval between the death of Dryden and the dawn of Pope's genius. The chief merit of the Campaign, we think, is that which was noticed by Johnson, the manly and rational rejection of fiction. The first great poet whose works have come down to us sang of war long before war became a science or a trade. If, in his time, there was enmity between two little Greek towns, each poured forth its crowd of citizens, ignorant of discipline, and armed with

[1] A market once stood on the land where now is Regent Street and the Criterion Theatre.

[2] Secretary of State under Anne.

[3] He was made commissioner of appeals in the excise, and shortly after an under-secretary of State.

implements of labour rudely turned into weapons. On each side appeared conspicuous a few chiefs, whose wealth had enabled them to procure good armour, horses, and chariots, and whose leisure had enabled them to practise military exercises. One such chief, if he were a man of great strength, agility, and courage, would probably be more formidable than twenty common men; and the force and dexterity with which he flung his spear might have no inconsiderable share in deciding the event of the day. Such were probably the battles with which Homer was familiar. But Homer related the actions of men of a former generation, of men who sprang from the Gods, and communed with the Gods face to face, of men, one of whom could with ease hurl rocks which two sturdy hinds of a later period would be unable even to lift. He therefore naturally represented their martial exploits as resembling in kind, but far surpassing in magnitude, those of the stoutest and most expert combatants of his own age. Achilles, clad in celestial armour, drawn by celestial coursers, grasping the spear which none but himself could raise, driving all Troy and Lycia[1] before him, and choking Scamander[2] with dead, was only a magnificent exaggeration of the real hero, who, strong, fearless, accustomed to the use of weapons, guarded by a shield and helmet of the best Sidonian[3] fabric, and whirled along by horses of Thessalian[4] breed, struck down with his own right arm foe after foe. In all rude societies similar notions are found.

[1] The Lycians were inhabitants of southern Asia Minor and allies of the Trojans.

[2] One of the rivers which flowed across the plains about Troy. The story alluded to is in the *Iliad*, Book XXI.

[3] Sidonia, the capital of Phœnicia, thirteen centuries before Christ, was famous for its commerce and manufactures, especially of rich cloths, splendid colors, and beautiful embroidery.

[4] The plains of Thessaly were famous for their horses even in historic times.

There are at this day countries where the Lifeguardsman Shaw[1] would be considered as a much greater warrior than the Duke of Wellington. Buonaparte loved to describe the astonishment with which the Mamelukes[2] looked at his diminutive figure. Mourad Bey, distinguished above all his fellows by his bodily strength, and by the skill with which he managed his horse and his sabre, could not believe that a man who was scarcely five feet high, and rode like a butcher, could be the greatest soldier in Europe.

56. Homer's descriptions of war had therefore as much truth as poetry requires. But truth was altogether wanting to the performances of those who, writing about battles which had scarcely anything in common with the battles of his times, servilely imitated his manner. The folly of Silius Italicus,[3] in particular, is positively nauseous. He undertook to record in verse the vicissitudes of a great struggle between generals of the first order: and his narrative is made up of the hideous wounds which these generals inflicted with their own hands. Asdrubal flings a spear which grazes the shoulder of the consul Nero; but Nero sends his spear into Asdrubal's side. Fabius slays Thuris and Butes and Maris and Arses, and the long-haired Adherbes, and the gigantic Thylis, and Sapharus and Monæsus, and the trumpeter Morinus. Hannibal runs Perusinus through the groin with a stake, and breaks the

[1] A tall private soldier and pugilist, renowned in story in the early part of this century. He killed ten French cuirassiers before he fell at Waterloo.

[2] A corps of cavalry, once belonging to the household guards of the Sultan in Egypt. They were massacred in a body by Mahomet Ali in 1811. Mourad Bey commanded them when Bonaparte in 1798 defeated the Mamelukes in the battle of the Pyramids.

[3] See § 12. The description here referred to is that of the battle of the Metaurus, fought between Hasdrubal and the Carthaginians, and the Roman Consuls, Livius and Nero, 207 B.C. The real fight had not the slightest resemblance to this tale.

backbone of Telesinus with a huge stone. This detestable fashion was copied in modern times, and continued to prevail down to the age of Addison. Several versifiers had described William turning thousands to flight by his single prowess, and dyeing the Boyne[1] with Irish blood. Nay, so estimable a writer as John Philips, the author of the Splendid Shilling,[2] represented Marlborough as having won the battle of Blenheim merely by strength of muscle and skill in fence. The following lines may serve as an example:

> "Churchill, viewing where
> The violence of Tallard most prevailed,
> Came to oppose his slaughtering arm. With speed
> Precipitate he rode, urging his way
> O'er hills of gasping heroes, and fallen steeds
> Rolling in death. Destruction, grim with blood,
> Attends his furious course. Around his head
> The glowing balls play innocent, while he
> With dire impetuous sway deals fatal blows
> Among the flying Gauls. In Gallic blood
> He dyes his reeking sword, and strews the ground
> With headless ranks. What can they do? Or how
> Withstand his wide-destroying sword?"

57. Addison, with excellent sense and taste, departed from this ridiculous fashion. He reserved his praise for the qualities which made Marlborough truly great, energy, sagacity, military science. But, above all, the poet extolled the firmness of that mind which, in the midst of confusion, uproar, and slaughter examined and disposed every thing with the serene wisdom of a higher intelligence.

58. Here it was that he introduced the famous compar-

[1] The battle of the Boyne in Ireland, July 12, 1690, in which William III. conquered James II.

[2] John Philips (1676–1708) wrote the *Splendid Shilling* and *Blenheim* as burlesques on *Paradise Lost*.

ison of Marlborough to an Angel guiding the whirlwind.[1] We will not dispute the general justice of Johnson's remarks on this passage.[2] But we must point out one circumstance which appears to have escaped all the critics. The extraordinary effect which this simile produced when it first appeared, and which to the following generation seemed inexplicable, is doubtless to be chiefly attributed to a line which most readers now regard as a feeble parenthesis,

"Such as, of late, o'er pale Britannia pass'd."

Addison spoke, not of a storm, but of the storm. The great tempest of November, 1703, the only tempest which in our latitude has equalled the rage of a tropical hurricane, had left a dreadful recollection in the minds of all men. No other tempest was ever in this country the occasion of a parliamentary address or of a public fast. Whole fleets had been cast away. Large mansions had been blown down. One Prelate had been buried beneath the ruins of his Palace.[3] London and Bristol[4] had presented

[1] "'Twas then great Marlborough's mighty soul was proved,
That, in the shock of charging hosts unmoved,
Amidst confusion, horror, and despair,
Examined all the dreadful scenes of war;
In peaceful thought the field of death surveyed,
To fainting squadrons sent the timely aid,
Inspired repulsed battalions to engage,
And taught the doubtful battle how to rage.
So when an angel by divine command
With rising tempests shakes a guilty land,
Such as of late o'er pale Britannia passed,
Calm and serene he drives the furious blast;
And pleased the Almighty's orders to perform,
Rides in the whirlwind and directs the storm."

[2] In the *Tatler*, Steele had called this simile "one of the noblest thoughts that ever entered into the heart of man." Johnson, in his *Life of Addison*, finds the simile exceedingly commonplace.

[3] The Bishop of Bath and Wells. The story is told in Defoe's *Storm*.

[4] Bristol was at this time the second city in England.

the appearance of cities just sacked. Hundreds of families were still in mourning. The prostrate trunks of large trees, and the ruins of houses, still attested, in all the southern counties, the fury of the blast. The popularity which the simile of the angel enjoyed among Addison's contemporaries, has always seemed to us to be a remarkable instance of the advantage which, in rhetoric and poetry, the particular has over the general.

59. Soon after the Campaign, was published Addison's Narrative of his Travels in Italy. The first effect produced by this Narrative was disappointment. The crowd of readers who expected politics and scandal, speculations on the projects of Victor Amadeus, and anecdotes about the jollities of convents and the amours of cardinals and nuns, were confounded by finding that the writer's mind was much more occupied by the war between the Trojans and Rutulians[1] than by the war between France and Austria; and that he seemed to have heard no scandal of later date than the gallantries of the Empress Faustina.[2] In time, however, the judgment of the many was overruled by that of the few; and, before the book was reprinted, it was so eagerly sought that it sold for five times the original price. It is still read with pleasure: the style is pure and flowing; the classical quotations and allusions are numerous and happy; and we are now and then charmed by that singularly humane and delicate humour in which Addison excelled all men. Yet this agreeable work, even when considered merely as the history of a literary tour, may justly be censured on account of its faults of omission. We have already said that, though rich in extracts from the Latin poets, it contains scarcely any references to

[1] The name of the Italian people who resisted the landing of Æneas.

[2] Faustina, the name of two empresses of Rome, mother and daughter, wives of Antonius Pius and Marcus Aurelius respectively. They both were of evil character.

the Latin orators and historians. We must add that it contains little, or rather no information, respecting the history and literature of modern Italy. To the best of our remembrance, Addison does not mention Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Boiardo, Berni, Lorenzo de' Medici, or Machiavelli.[1] He coldly tells us, that at Ferrara he saw the tomb of Ariosto, and that at Venice he heard the gondoliers sing verses of Tasso.[2] But for Tasso and Ariosto he cared far less than for Valerius Flaccus and Sidonius Apollinaris.[3] The gentle flow of the Ticin[4] brings a line of Silius to his mind. The sulphurous steam of Albula suggests to him several passages of Martial.[5] But he has not a word to say of the illustrious dead of Santa Croce[6]; he crosses the wood of Ravenna without recollecting the Spectre Huntsman, and wanders up and down Rimini without one thought of Francesca.[7] At Paris, he had eagerly sought an introduction to Boileau; but he seems not to have been

[1] This catalogue of great Italians may be briefly summarized as follows: Dante (1265–1321), one of the greatest of the world's poets, author of the *Divine Comedy;* Petrarch (1304–1374), famous as the writer of sonnets to Laura, but hardly less famous as a classical scholar; Boccaccio (1313–1375), novelist, author of the *Decameron;* Boiardo (1434–1494), author of a great Italian poem, *Orlando in Love;* Berni (1498–1535), author of a famous burlesque on the same; Lorenzo (1449–1492), the Florentine statesman and man of letters; Machiavelli (1469–1527), another Florentine, author of famous treatises on politics and government, especially *The Prince*, whose hard-hearted maxims of statecraft have made his name a by-word.

[2] For Ariosto and Tasso see *Milton*, § 46 and this essay, p. 192.

[3] Valerius Flaccus (died 86 A.D.), wrote a long poem about the Argonauts. Apollinaris Sidonius (430 A.D.), Bishop of Clermont, left twenty-four poems and nine books of *Epistles*.

[4] Ticinus, a river of Italy flowing into the Po.

[5] "Albulæ aquæ," sulphur springs near Tibur, a few miles from Rome. Martial (43–104 A.D.), a famous writer of Latin epigrams.

[6] The church in Florence where is Dante's monument, and Michael Angelo, Galileo, and other great Florentines are buried.

[7] The Spectre Huntsman comes from a striking tale of Boccaccio's.

at all aware that at Florence he was in the vicinity of a poet with whom Boileau could not sustain a comparison, of the greatest lyric poet of modern times, Vincenzio Filicaja.[1] This is the more remarkable, because Filicaja was the favourite poet of the accomplished Somers, under whose protection Addison travelled, and to whom the account of the Travels is dedicated. The truth is, that Addison knew little, and cared less, about the literature of modern Italy. His favourite models were Latin. His favourite critics were French. Half the Tuscan[2] poetry that he had read seemed to him monstrous, and the other half tawdry.

60. His Travels were followed by the lively Opera of Rosamond. This piece was ill set to music, and therefore failed on the stage, but it completely succeeded in print, and is indeed excellent in its kind. The smoothness with which the verses glide, and the elasticity with which they bound, is, to our ears at least, very pleasing. We are inclined to think that if Addison had left heroic couplets to Pope, and blank verse to Rowe,[3] and had employed himself in writing airy and spirited songs, his reputation as a poet would have stood far higher than it now does. Some years after his death, Rosamond was set to new music by Doctor Arne[4]; and was performed with complete success. Several passages long retained their popularity, and were daily

Francesca is referred to in a beautiful passage in Dante (*Inferno*, V.), which should be read to the class.

[1] Filicaja (1642–1707), writer of odes and sonnets. It will be noticed how much interest Macaulay himself takes in Italian poetry, and how well he knows it. See *Essay on Milton*, § 28.

[2] Here a general word for Italian.

[3] Nicholas Rowe (1673–1718), poet-laureate of England. Blank verse is unrhymed verse. The term is applied specially to a verse of five feet, commonly used in English drama and epic poetry.

[4] Michael Arne (1710–1778), the English composer of *Rule Britannia* other songs still popular, and a few operas.

sung, during the latter part of George the Second's reign, at all the harpsichords[1] in England.

61. While Addison thus amused himself, his prospects, and the prospects of his party, were constantly becoming brighter and brighter. In the spring of 1705, the ministers were freed from the restraint imposed by a House of Commons, in which Tories of the most perverse class had the ascendency. The elections were favourable to the Whigs. The coalition which had been tacitly and gradually formed was now openly avowed. The Great Seal[2] was given to Cowper. Somers and Halifax were sworn of the Council. Halifax was sent in the following year to carry the decorations of the order of the garter to the Electoral Prince of Hanover,[3] and was accompanied on this honourable mission by Addison, who had just been made Undersecretary of State. The Secretary of State under whom Addison first served was Sir Charles Hedges, a Tory. But Hedges was soon dismissed to make room for the most vehement of Whigs, Charles, Earl of Sunderland.[4] In every department of the state, indeed, the High Churchmen[5] were compelled to give place to their opponents. At the close of 1707, the Tories who still remained in office strove to rally, with Harley[6] at their head. But the attempt, though favoured

§§ 61-66. *Addison's employments and personal qualities.*

[1] A stringed instrument, looking like a piano, but whose tones were induced by plucking the strings, not striking them. It made a tinkling noise. It figured as a piano does now both in private houses and in concerts.

[2] The Great Seal, giving official sanction to important documents, is the badge of the office of the lord chancellor.

[3] Afterwards George I.

[4] See Introduction.

[5] Referring to the party in the Anglican church which attached importance to the authority of the church and priesthood, the traditional organization and ritual, and so forth.

[6] See Introduction.

by the Queen, who had always been a Tory at heart, and who had now quarrelled with the Duchess of Marlborough, was unsuccessful. The time was not yet. The Captain General was at the height of popularity and glory. The Low Church party had a majority in Parliament. The country squires and rectors, though occasionally uttering a savage growl, were for the most part in a state of torpor, which lasted till they were roused into activity, and indeed into madness, by the persecution of Sacheverell.[1] Harley and his adherents were compelled to retire. The victory of the Whigs was complete. At the general election of 1708, their strength in the House of Commons became irresistible; and, before the end of that year, Somers was made Lord President of the Council, and Wharton[2] Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

62. Addison sat for Malmsbury in the House of Commons which was elected in 1708. But the House of Commons was not the field for him. The bashfulness of his nature made his wit and eloquence useless in debate. He once rose, but could not overcome his diffidence, and ever after remained silent. Nobody can think it strange that a great writer should fail as a speaker. But many, probably, would think it strange that Addison's failure as a speaker should have had no unfavourable effect on his success as a politician. In our time, a man of high rank and great fortune might, though speaking very little and very ill, hold a considerable post. But it would now be inconceivable that a mere adventurer, a man who, when out of office, must live by his pen, should in a few years become successively Undersecretary of State, chief Secretary for Ireland, and Secretary of State, without some oratorical talent. Addison, without high birth, and with little property, rose to a post which Dukes, the heads of

[1] See Introduction.

[2] A member of the Whig Junto. See Introduction.

the great houses of Talbot, Russell, and Bentinck,[1] have thought it an honour to fill. Without opening his lips in debate, he rose to a post, the highest that Chatham or Fox[2] ever reached. And this he did before he had been nine years in Parliament. We must look for the explanation of this seeming miracle to the peculiar circumstances in which that generation was placed. During the interval which elapsed between the time when the Censorship of the Press ceased, and the time when parliamentary proceedings began to be freely reported, literary talents were, to a public man, of much more importance, and oratorical talents of much less importance, than in our time. At present, the best way of giving rapid and wide publicity to a fact or an argument is to introduce that fact or argument into a speech made in Parliament. If a political tract were to appear superior to the Conduct of the Allies, or to the best numbers of the Freeholder, the circulation of such a tract would be languid indeed when compared with the circulation of every remarkable word uttered in the deliberations of the legislature. A speech made in the House of Commons at four in the morning is on thirty thousand tables before ten.[3] A speech made on the Monday is read on the Wednesday by multitudes in Antrim and Aberdeenshire.[4]

[1] Talbot, Lord Shrewsbury. See above, § 28. Russell, the family name of the Dukes of Bedford, a great Whig connection, furnishing many statesmen to England. Bentinck, the founder of the Portland dukedom, the companion, adviser, and agent of William III., came with him from Holland. His descendants have played a great part in English politics.

[2] Chatham (1708-1778), the elder Pitt, one of the greatest of English orators. Fox (1749-1806), the Tory orator and rival of the younger Pitt.

[3] It would be hard to state what the number of people is now who read the daily reports of a Parliamentary debate. Before another sunset the whole world reads every important speech made in Parliament.

[4] Antrim, a northern county of Ireland. Aberdeenshire, in Scotland.

The orator, by the help of a shorthand writer, has to a great extent superseded the pamphleteer. It was not so in the reign of Anne. The best speech could then produce no effect except on those who heard it. It was only by means of the press that the opinion of the public without doors could be influenced; and the opinion of the public without doors could not but be of the highest importance in a country governed by parliaments, and indeed at that time governed by triennial parliaments. The pen was therefore a more formidable political engine than the tongue. Mr. Pitt[1] and Mr. Fox contended only in Parliament. But Walpole[2] and Pulteney,[3] the Pitt and Fox of an earlier period, had not done half of what was necessary, when they sat down amidst the acclamations of the House of Commons. They had still to plead their cause before the country, and this they could do only by means of the press. Their works are now forgotten. But it is certain that there were in Grub Street[4] few more assiduous scribblers of Thoughts, Letters, Answers, Remarks, than these two great chiefs of parties. Pulteney, when leader of the Opposition, and possessed of thirty thousand a year, edited the Craftsman. Walpole, though not a man of literary habits, was the author of at least ten pamphlets, and retouched and corrected many more. These facts sufficiently show of how great importance literary assistance then was to the contending parties. St. John[5] was, certainly, in

[1] The younger Pitt (1759–1806), the most famous writer of his day, made leader of the House of Commons by his eloquence at the age of twenty-three.

[2] Sir Robert Walpole, a noted English statesman, especially remembered as prime minister of George II. (1721–1742).

[3] Pulteney (1684–1764), a prominent Whig in the reign of Queen Anne, who became Walpole's opponent in the reign of George II.

[4] A street near Moorfields, London, formerly a resort of needy writers; hence, a general term for the crowd of nameless writers for the press.

[5] Lord Bolingbroke, the friend of Pope and Swift.

Anne's reign, the best Tory speaker; Cowper[1] was probably the best Whig speaker. But it may well be doubted whether St. John did so much for the Tories as Swift, and whether Cowper did so much for the Whigs as Addison. When these things are duly considered, it will not be thought strange that Addison should have climbed higher in the state than any other Englishman has ever, by means merely of literary talents, been able to climb. Swift would, in all probability, have climbed as high, if he had not been encumbered by his cassock and his pudding sleeves.[2] As far as the homage of the great went, Swift had as much of it as if he had been Lord Treasurer.

63. To the influence which Addison derived from his literary talents was added all the influence which arises from character. The world, always ready to think the worst of needy political adventurers, was forced to make one exception. Restlessness, violence, audacity, laxity of principle, are the vices ordinarily attributed to that class of men. But faction itself could not deny that Addison had, through all changes of fortune, been strictly faithful to his early opinions, and to his early friends; that his integrity was without stain; that his whole deportment indicated a fine sense of the becoming; that, in the utmost heat of controversy, his zeal was tempered by a regard for truth, humanity, and social decorum; that no outrage could ever provoke him to retaliation unworthy of a Christian and a gentleman; and that his only faults were a too sensitive delicacy, and a modesty which amounted to bashfulness.

64. He was undoubtedly one of the most popular men of his time; and much of his popularity he owed, we believe, to that very timidity which his friends lamented. That timidity often prevented him from exhibiting his talents

[1] See Introduction.

[2] Large, loose sleeves of a clergyman's gown.

to the best advantage. But it propitiated Nemesis.[1] It averted that envy which would otherwise have been excited by fame so splendid, and by so rapid an elevation. No man is so great a favourite with the public as he who is at once an object of admiration, of respect, and of pity; and such were the feelings which Addison inspired. Those who enjoyed the privilege of hearing his familiar conversation, declared with one voice that it was superior even to his writings. The brilliant Mary Montague[2] said, that she had known all the wits, and that Addison was the best company in the world. The malignant Pope was forced to own, that there was a charm in Addison's talk, which could be found nowhere else. Swift, when burning with animosity against the Whigs, could not but confess to Stella[3] that, after all, he had never known any associate so agreeable as Addison. Steele, an excellent judge of lively conversation, said, that the conversation of Addison was at once the most polite, and the most mirthful, that could be imagined; that it was Terence[4] and Catullus in one, heightened by an exquisite something which was neither Terence nor Catullus, but Addison alone. Young,[5] an excellent judge of serious conversation, said, that when Addison was at his ease, he went on in a noble strain of thought and

[1] Nemesis, the Greek goddess of retribution, who always saw to it that excessive prosperity should be counterbalanced by proportionate calamity.

[2] Lady Mary Wortley Montague (1689–1762), daughter of the Duke of Kingston, wife of the English ambassador to Constantinople, whence she wrote very diverting letters. She was a great friend of Pope.

[3] Name given by Swift to his sweetheart, Esther Johnson, to whom he wrote a most curious series of journal letters, describing his whole life from day to day.

[4] Terence (185–159 B.C.), a celebrated Roman comic poet, whose grace of style is proverbial.

[5] Edward Young (1681–1765), an English poet. His most famous work is the *Night Thoughts*.

language, so as to chain the attention of every hearer. Nor were Addison's great colloquial powers more admirable than the courtesy and softness of heart which appeared in his conversation. At the same time, it would be too much to say that he was wholly devoid of the malice which is, perhaps, inseparable from a keen sense of the ludicrous. He had one habit which both Swift and Stella applauded, and which we hardly know how to blame. If his first attempts to set a presuming dunce right were ill received, he changed his tone, "assented with civil leer," [1] and lured the flattered coxcomb deeper and deeper into absurdity. That such was his practice we should, we think, have guessed from his works. The Tatler's criticisms on Mr. Softly's sonnet,[2] and the Spectator's dialogue with the politician who is so zealous for the honour of Lady Q—p—t—s, are excellent specimens of this innocent mischief.[3]

65. Such were Addison's talents for conversation. But his rare gifts were not exhibited to crowds or to strangers. As soon as he entered a large company, as soon as he saw an unknown face, his lips were sealed, and his manners became constrained. None who met him only in great assemblies would have been able to believe that he was the same man who had often kept a few friends listening and laughing round a table, from the time when the play ended, till the clock of St. Paul's in Covent Garden[4] struck four. Yet, even at such a table, he was not seen to the best ad-

[1] A phrase from Pope's description of Addison. See Introduction.

[2] *Tatler*, No. 163.

[3] *Spectator*, No. 568.

[4] Covent Garden, a space in London near the Strand, once a part of the convent Garden of the Westminster monks. In Addison's time it was full of coffee-houses and taverns, a favorite lounging place for the wits. It is now a great market, especially for flowers. St. Paul's was built by Inigo Jones.

vantage. To enjoy his conversation in the highest perfection, it was necessary to be alone with him, and to hear him, in his own phrase, think aloud. "There is no such thing," he used to say, "as real conversation, but between two persons."

66. This timidity, a timidity surely neither ungraceful nor unamiable, led Addison into the two most serious faults which can with justice be imputed to him. He found that wine broke the spell which lay on his fine intellect, and was therefore too easily seduced into convivial excess. Such excess was in that age regarded, even by grave men, as the most venial of all peccadilloes, and was so far from being a mark of illbreeding that it was almost essential to the character of a fine gentleman. But the smallest speck is seen on a white ground; and almost all the biographers of Addison have said something about this failing. Of any other statesman or writer of Queen Anne's reign, we should no more think of saying that he sometimes took too much wine, than that he wore a long wig and a sword.

67. To the excessive modesty of Addison's nature, we must ascribe another fault which generally arises from a very different cause. He became a little too fond of seeing himself surrounded by a small circle of admirers, to whom he was as a King or rather as a God. All these men were far inferior to him in ability, and some of them had very serious faults. Nor did those faults escape his observation; for, if ever there was an eye which saw through and through men, it was the eye of Addison. But, with the keenest observation, and the finest sense of the ridiculous, he had a large charity. The feeling with which he looked on most of his humble companions was one of benevolence, slightly tinctured with contempt. He was at perfect ease in their company; he was grateful for their devoted attachment;

and he loaded them with benefits. Their veneration for him appears to have exceeded that with which Johnson was regarded by Boswell,[1] or Warburton by Hurd.[2] It was not in the power of adulation to turn such a head, or deprave such a heart, as Addison's. But it must in candour be admitted that he contracted some of the faults which can scarcely be avoided by any person who is so unfortunate as to be the oracle of a small literary coterie.

68. One member of this little society was Eustace Budgell, a young Templar[3] of some literature, and a distant relation of Addison. There was at this time no stain on the character of Budgell, and it is not improbable that his career would have been prosperous and honourable, if the life of his cousin had been prolonged. But, when the master was laid in the grave, the disciple broke loose from all restraint, descended rapidly from one degree of vice and misery to another, ruined his fortune by follies, attempted to repair it by crimes, and at length closed a wicked and unhappy life by selfmurder. Yet, to the last, the wretched man, gambler, lampooner, cheat, forger, as he was, retained his affection and veneration for Addison, and recorded those feelings in the last lines which he traced before he hid himself from infamy under London Bridge.

69. Another of Addison's favourite companions was Ambrose Phillipps, a good Whig and a middling poet, who had the honour of bringing into fashion a species of com-

[1] James Boswell (1740–1795), the adorer and biographer of Dr. Samuel Johnson. See Macaulay's *Life of Johnson*, and *Essay on Boswell's Johnson*.

[2] Warburton, the English bishop of Gloucester (1698–1779), author of the *Divine Legation of Moses*, a book once very famous. Bishop Hurd was his biographer and admirer. He also edited Addison.

[3] A student of law, so called from having chambers in the Temple in London. This site, once occupied by the Knights Templars, is the property of the two societies of lawyers which have the right of examining candidates and "calling to the bar" of England.

position which has been called, after his name, Namby Pamby. But the most remarkable members of the little senate, as Pope long afterwards called it, were Richard Steele and Thomas Tickell.

70. Steele[1] had known Addison from childhood. They had been together at the Charter House and at Oxford; but circumstances had then, for a time, separated them widely. Steele had left college without taking a degree, had been disinherited by a rich relation, had led a vagrant life, had served in the army, had tried to find the philosopher's stone,[2] and had written a religious treatise and several comedies. He was one of those people whom it is impossible either to hate or to respect.[3] His temper was sweet, his affections warm, his spirits lively, his passions strong, and his principles weak. His life was spent in sinning and repenting; in inculcating what was right, and doing what was wrong. In speculation, he was a man of piety and honour; in practice he was much of the rake and a little of the swindler. He was, however, so good-natured that it was not easy to be seriously angry with him, and that even rigid moralists felt more inclined to pity than to blame him, when he diced himself into a spunging[4] house or drank himself into a fever. Addison regarded Steele with kindness not unmingled with scorn, tried, with

[1] See Introduction.

[2] The "great elixir" in alchemy, which was believed to have the property of transmuting lower metals to gold. The pursuit of alchemy did not die out till the dawn of chemistry, in the seventeenth century. It was a favorite pursuit of Augustus the Strong, Elector of Saxony.

[3] The picture of Steele's weakness is much over-colored by Macaulay to make an antithesis to Addison's merit. Thackeray in his *English Humorists* and *Henry Esmond* has done the same thing.

[4] Another spelling of "sponging house," a place where persons arrested for debt were kept for twenty-four hours by the bailiff, or sheriff's officer, till they should pay their debts before imprisonment. The whole process is obsolete now.

little success, to keep him out of scrapes, introduced him to the great, procured a good place for him, corrected his plays, and, though by no means rich, lent him large sums of money. One of these loans appears, from a letter dated in August, 1708, to have amounted to a thousand pounds. These pecuniary transactions probably led to frequent bickerings. It is said that, on one occasion, Steele's negligence, or dishonesty, provoked Addison to repay himself by the help of a bailiff. We cannot join with Miss Aikin in rejecting this story. Johnson heard it from Savage,[1] who heard it from Steele. Few private transactions which took place a hundred and twenty years ago, are proved by stronger evidence than this. But we can by no means agree with those who condemn Addison's severity. The most amiable of mankind may well be moved to indignation, when what he has earned hardly, and lent with great inconvenience to himself, for the purpose of relieving a friend in distress, is squandered with insane profusion. We will illustrate our meaning by an example, which is not the less striking because it is taken from fiction. Dr. Harrison, in Fielding's Amelia,[2] is represented as the most benevolent of human beings; yet he takes in execution, not only the goods, but the person of his friend Booth. Dr. Harrison resorts to this strong measure because he has been informed that Booth, while pleading poverty as an excuse for not paying just debts, has been buying fine jewellery, and setting up a coach. No person who is well acquainted with Steele's life and correspondence can doubt that he behaved quite as ill to Addison as Booth was accused of behaving to Dr. Harrison. The real history, we have little doubt, was something like this:—A letter comes to Addison, imploring help in pathetic terms, and promising reformation and

[1] Richard Savage (1698–1743), a poet and friend of Johnson, who wrote his life.

[2] A famous novel by Henry Fielding, published in 1751.

speedy repayment. Poor Dick declares that he has not an inch of candle, or a bushel of coals, or credit with the butcher for a shoulder of mutton. Addison is moved. He determines to deny himself some medals which are wanting to his series of the Twelve Cæsars; to put off buying the new edition of Bayle's Dictionary[1]; and to wear his old sword and buckles another year. In this way he manages to send a hundred pounds to his friend. The next day he calls on Steele, and finds scores of gentlemen and ladies assembled. The fiddles are playing. The table is groaning under Champagne, Burgundy, and pyramids of sweetmeats. Is it strange that a man whose kindness is thus abused, should send sheriff's officers to reclaim what is due to him?

71. Tickell[2] was a young man, fresh from Oxford, who had introduced himself to public notice by writing a most ingenious and graceful little poem in praise of the opera of Rosamond. He deserved, and at length attained, the first place in Addison's friendship. For a time Steele and Tickell were on good terms. But they loved Addison too much to love each other, and at length became as bitter enemies as the rival bulls in Virgil.[3]

72. At the close of 1708 Wharton became Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and appointed Addison Chief Secretary. Addison was consequently under the necessity of quitting London for Dublin. Besides the chief secretaryship, which was then worth about two thousand pounds a year, he ob-

§§ 72-74. *Addison in Ireland.*

[1] Pierre Bayle (1647–1706), the great French teacher of eighteenth century scepticism, editor of a cyclopædia called *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, which was intended to embody a sceptical view of all subjects in the universe. It is said to have been always open on Addison's table.

[2] See Introduction.

[3] *Georgics*, III., 220–225.

tained a patent appointing him keeper of the Irish Records for life, with a salary of three or four hundred a year. Budgell accompanied his cousin in the capacity of private Secretary.

73. Wharton and Addison had nothing in common but Whiggism. The Lord Lieutenant was not only licentious and corrupt, but was distinguished from other libertines and jobbers by a callous impudence which presented the strongest contrast to the Secretary's gentleness and delicacy. Many parts of the Irish administration at this time appear to have deserved serious blame. But against Addison there was not a murmur. He long afterwards asserted, what all the evidence which we have ever seen tends to prove, that his diligence and integrity gained the friendship of all the most considerable persons in Ireland.

74. The parliamentary career of Addison in Ireland has, we think, wholly escaped the notice of all his biographers. He was elected member for the borough of Cavan[1] in the summer of 1709; and in the journals of two sessions his name frequently occurs. Some of the entries appear to indicate that he so far overcame his timidity as to make speeches. Nor is this by any means improbable; for the Irish House of Commons[2] was a far less formidable audience than the English House; and many tongues which were tied by fear in the greater assembly became fluent in the smaller. Gerard Hamilton,[3] for example, who, from fear of losing the fame gained by his single speech, sat mute at Westminster during forty years, spoke with great effect at Dublin when he was Secretary to Lord Halifax.

75. While Addison was in Ireland, an event occurred to which he owes his high and permanent rank among British

§§ 75–80. *The founding of the Tatler.*

[1] Cavan, a northern county in Ireland.

[2] The Irish House, which ceased to exist at the Union in 1800.

[3] He was known as "Single-speech Hamilton."

writers. As yet his fame rested on performances which, though highly respectable, were not built for duration, and which would, if he had produced nothing else, have now been almost forgotten, on some excellent Latin verses, on some English verses which occasionally rose above mediocrity, and on a book of travels, agreeably written, but not indicating any extraordinary powers of mind. These works showed him to be a man of taste, sense, and learning. The time had come when he was to prove himself a man of genius, and to enrich our literature with compositions which will live as long as the English language.

76. In the spring of 1709 Steele formed a literary project, of which he was far indeed from foreseeing the consequences. Periodical papers had during many years been published in London. Most of these were political; but in some of them questions of morality, taste, and love casuistry had been discussed. The literary merit of these works was small indeed; and even their names are now known only to the curious.

77. Steele had been appointed Gazetteer[1] by Sunderland, at the request, it is said, of Addison, and thus had access to foreign intelligence earlier and more authentic than was in those times within the reach of an ordinary newswriter. This circumstance seems to have suggested to him the scheme of publishing a periodical paper on a new plan. It was to appear on the days on which the post left London for the country, which were, in that generation, the Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. It was to contain the foreign news, accounts of theatrical representations, and the literary gossip of Will's and of the Grecian.[2] It was also to

[1] The three official newspapers, published in London, Dublin, and Edinburgh, gave lists of government appointments, honors, and promotions as well as official news of all sorts. This Gazette now forms a part of the daily papers in London. See Macaulay's *History*, Chapter III., aud *Tatler*, No. 18.

[2] See Introduction.

contain remarks on the fashionable topics of the day, compliments to beauties, pasquinades[1] on noted sharpers, and criticisms on popular preachers. The aim of Steele does not appear to have been at first higher than this. He was not ill qualified to conduct the work which he had planned. His public intelligence he drew from the best sources. He knew the town, and had paid dear for his knowledge. He had read much more than the dissipated men of that time were in the habit of reading. He was a rake[2] among scholars, and a scholar among rakes. His style was easy and not incorrect; and, though his wit and humour were of no high order, his gay animal spirits imparted to his compositions an air of vivacity which ordinary readers could hardly distinguish from comic genius. His writings have been well compared to those light wines which, though deficient in body and flavour, are yet a pleasant small drink, if not kept too long, or carried too far.

78. Isaac Bickerstaff, Esquire, Astrologer, was an imaginary person, almost as well known in that age as Mr. Paul Pry[3] or Mr. Samuel Pickwick in ours. Swift had assumed the name of Bickerstaff in a satirical pamphlet against Partridge, the maker of almanacks.[4] Partridge had been fool enough to publish a furious reply. Bickerstaff had rejoined in a second pamphlet still more diverting than the first. All the wits had combined to keep up the joke, and the town was long in convulsions of laughter. Steele

[1] Rhyming satires, published anonymously. The word is derived from a statue, named Pasquin by the Romans of the sixteenth century, on which were affixed such epigrams for popular amusement.

[2] A dissolute person of fashion. The word was much used in Addison's time.

[3] A character in a play of Poole's, very popular in Macaulay's day.

[4] Swift's joke consisted in first foretelling Partridge's death and then announcing that he was dead. Partridge kept replying angrily that he was not. The joke was carried on with much elaboration in the *Tatler*.

determined to employ the name which this controversy had made popular; and, in 1709, it was announced that Isaac Bickerstaff, Esquire, Astrologer, was about to publish a paper called the Tatler.

79. Addison had not been consulted about this scheme: but as soon as he heard of it, he determined to give his assistance. The effect of that assistance cannot be better described than in Steele's own words. "I fared," he said, "like a distressed prince who calls in a powerful neighbour to his aid. I was undone by my auxiliary. When I had once called him in, I could not subsist without dependence on him." "The paper," he says elsewhere, "was advanced indeed. It was raised to a greater thing than I intended it."

80. It is probable that Addison, when he sent across St. George's Channel his first contributions to the Tatler, had no notion of the extent and variety of his own powers. He was the possessor of a vast mine, rich with a hundred ores. But he had been acquainted only with the least precious part of his treasures, and had hitherto contented himself with producing sometimes copper and sometimes lead, intermingled with a little silver. All at once, and by mere accident, he had lighted on an inexhaustible vein of the finest gold.

81. The mere choice and arrangement of his words would have sufficed to make his essays classical. For never, not even by Dryden, not even by Temple,[1] had the English language been written with such sweetness, grace, and facility. But this was the smallest part of Addison's praise. Had he clothed his thoughts in the half French style of Horace Walpole,[2] or in the half Latin style of Dr. Johnson,

§§ 81-91. *Addison's quality as an essayist. Contrasted with Swift and Voltaire.*

[1] Sir William Temple (1628-1699), a statesman of the reign of Charles II., famous for negotiating the Triple Alliance.

[2] Horace Walpole (1717-1797), son of Sir Robert Walpole, a smart

or in the half German[1] jargon of the present day, his genius would have triumphed over all faults of manner. As a moral satirist he stands unrivalled. If ever the best Tatlers and Spectators were equalled in their own kind, we should be inclined to guess that it must have been by the lost comedies of Menander.[2]

82. In wit, properly so called, Addison was not inferior to Cowley[3] or Butler.[4] No single ode of Cowley contains so many happy analogies as are crowded into the lines to Sir Godfrey Kneller[5] and we would undertake to collect from the Spectators as great a number of ingenious illustrations as can be found in Hudibras. The still higher faculty of invention Addison possessed in still larger measure. The numerous fictions, generally original, often wild and grotesque, but always singularly graceful and happy, which are found in his essays, fully entitle him to the rank of a great poet, a rank to which his metrical compositions give him no claim. As an observer of life, of manners, of all the shades of human character, he stands in the first class. And what he observed he had the art of communicating in two widely different ways. He could describe

writer, elegant collector, and man of fashion. His letters and his novel, *The Castle of Otranto*, represent him to the present world.

[1] Probably a criticism on Carlyle's English. He was at the height of his popularity in 1843.

[2] Menander (342 B.C.), the great Athenian comedy writer. Many fragments of his work remain, but no whole play.

[3] Cowley (1618–1667), Milton's contemporary. See *Essay on Milton*, § 3. He enjoyed a great fame; and was thought in Milton's lifetime the greater poet of the two.

[4] Samuel Butler (1612–1680), author of *Hudibras*, a poem satirizing Puritanism, much read, and responsible for a good deal of modern imagination about the Puritans.

[5] Sir Godfrey Kneller (1646–1723), a German painter, who made many portraits in the courts of Charles II., James II., William, and Anne. He painted portraits of his fellow-members in the Kit Cat Club.

virtues, vices, habits, whims, as well as Clarendon.[1] But he could do something better. He could call human beings into existence, and make them exhibit themselves. If we wish to find anything more vivid than Addison's best portraits, we must go either to Shakspeare or to Cervantes.[2]

83. But what shall we say of Addison's humour, of his sense of the ludicrous, of his power of awakening that sense in others, and of drawing mirth from incidents which occur every day, and from little peculiarities of temper and manner, such as may be found in every man? We feel the charm: we give ourselves up to it: but we strive in vain to analyse it.

84. Perhaps the best way of describing Addison's peculiar pleasantry is to compare it with the pleasantry of some other great satirists. The three most eminent masters of the art of ridicule, during the eighteenth century, were, we conceive, Addison, Swift, and Voltaire.[3] Which of the three had the greatest power of moving laughter may be questioned. But each of them, within his own domain, was supreme.

85. Voltaire is the prince of buffoons. His merriment is without disguise or restraint. He gambols; he grins; he shakes his sides; he points the finger; he turns up the nose; he shoots out the tongue. The manner of Swift is the very opposite to this. He moves laughter, but never joins in it. He appears in his works such as he appeared in society. All the company are convulsed with merri-

[1] Edward Hyde, Lord Clarendon (1608-1674), the adviser of Charles I., and Charles II., lord chancellor in 1660. He was the author of the great history of the Civil War.

[2] Cervantes (1547–1616), author of *Don Quixote*, the great Spanish classic.

[3] Voltaire, the assumed name of François Arouet, a famous French writer (1694–1778). For a further account of his character see Macaulay's *Essay on Frederic the Great*.

ment, while the Dean, the author of all the mirth, preserves an invincible gravity, and even sourness of aspect, and gives utterance to the most eccentric and ludicrous fancies, with the air of a man reading the commination service.

86. The manner of Addison is as remote from that of Swift as from that of Voltaire. He neither laughs out like the French wit, nor, like the Irish wit, throws a double portion of severity into his countenance while laughing inwardly; but preserves a look peculiarly his own, a look of demure serenity, disturbed only by an arch sparkle of the eye, an almost imperceptible elevation of the brow, an almost imperceptible curl of the lip. His tone is never that either of a Jack Pudding[1] or of a Cynic.[2] It is that of a gentleman, in whom the quickest sense of the ridiculous is constantly tempered by good nature and good breeding.

87. We own that the humour of Addison is, in our opinion, of a more delicious flavour than the humour of either Swift or Voltaire. Thus much, at least, is certain, that both Swift and Voltaire have been successfully mimicked, and that no man has yet been able to mimic Addison. The letter of the Abbé Coyer to Pansophe is Voltaire all over, and imposed, during a long time, on the Academicians of Paris. There are passages in Arbuthnot's[3] satirical works which we, at least, cannot distinguish from

[1] Jack-pudding, equivalent to the German *Hans Wurst*. It means a buffoon or funny man.

[2] Cynic, a Greek word meaning "dog-like," originally referring to one of a Greek school of philosophers, called "dogs," in allusion to their coarse mode of life or surly disposition. They taught that virtue consists in self-control and that pleasure is itself an evil. Hence it is a name for all persons of a captious and snarling disposition.

[3] John Arbuthnot (1667–1735), author of the *History of John Bull*, in which this nickname for Englishmen was first used.

Swift's best writing. But of the many eminent men who have made Addison their model, though several have copied his mere diction with happy effect, none has been able to catch the tone of his pleasantry. In the World, in the Connoisseur, in the Mirror, in the Lounger, there are numerous papers written in obvious imitation of his Tatlers and Spectators. Most of those papers have some merit; many are very lively and amusing; but there is not a single one which could be passed off as Addison's on a critic of the smallest perspicacity.[1]

88. But that which chiefly distinguishes Addison from Swift, from Voltaire, from almost all the other great masters of ridicule, is the grace, the nobleness, the moral purity, which we find even in his merriment. Severity, gradually hardening and darkening into misanthropy, characterizes the works of Swift. The nature of Voltaire was, indeed, not inhuman; but he venerated nothing. Neither in the masterpieces of art nor in the purest examples of virtue, neither in the Great First Cause nor in the awful enigma of the grave, could he see any thing but subjects for drollery. The more solemn and august the theme, the more monkey-like was his grimacing and chattering. The mirth of Swift is the mirth of Mephistophiles[2]; the mirth of Voltaire is the mirth of Puck.[3] If, as Soame Jenyns[4] oddly imagined, a portion of the happiness of Seraphim and just men made perfect be derived from an exquisite perception of the ludicrous, their mirth must surely be none other than the mirth of Addison; a mirth consistent with tender compassion for all that is frail, and with pro-

[1] Perspicacious means quick-sighted, keen, and is often confused by learners with perspicuous, meaning transparent, easy to see through.

[2] The cold "denying spirit" in Goethe's *Faust*.

[3] In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

[4] Soame Jenyns (1704–1787), an English essayist and theologian, much esteemed in his time.

found reverence for all that is sublime. Nothing great, nothing amiable, no moral duty, no doctrine of natural or revealed religion, has ever been associated by Addison with any degrading idea. His humanity is without a parallel in literary history. The highest proof of virtue is to possess boundless power without abusing it. No kind of power is more formidable than the power of making men ridiculous; and that power Addison possessed in boundless measure. How grossly that power was abused by Swift and by Voltaire is well known. But of Addison it may be confidently affirmed that he has blackened no man's character, nay, that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find in all the volumes which he has left us a single taunt which can be called ungenerous or unkind. Yet he had detractors, whose malignity might have seemed to justify as terrible a revenge as that which men, not superior to him in genius, wreaked on Bettesworth and on Franc de Pompignan.[1] He was a politician; he was the best writer of his party; he lived in times of fierce excitement, in times when persons of high character and station stooped to scurrility such as is now practised only by the basest of mankind. Yet no provocation and no example could induce him to return railing for railing.

89. Of the service which his Essays rendered to morality it is difficult to speak too highly. It is true that, when the Tatler appeared, that age of outrageous profaneness and licentiousness which followed the Restoration[2] had passed away. Jeremy Collier[3] had shamed the theatres into

[1] Bettesworth, a Dublin lawyer; de Pompignan, a French marquis: victims respectively of Swift and Voltaire.

[2] Of Charles II., in 1660. The period is extended to cover the whole reign of that king.

[3] Jeremy Collier (1650-1726), a clergyman celebrated for his effort to purify the stage. See Macaulay's *Essay on the Comic Dramatists of the Restoration*.

something which, compared with the excesses of Etherege and Wycherley,[1] might be called decency. Yet there still lingered in the public mind a pernicious notion that there was some connection between genius and profligacy, between the domestic virtues and the sullen formality of the Puritans. That error it is the glory of Addison to have dispelled. He taught the nation that the faith and the morality of Hale[2] and Tillotson[3] might be found in company with wit more sparkling than the wit of Congreve, and with humour richer than the humour of Vanbrugh.[4] So effectually, indeed, did he retort on vice the mockery which had recently been directed against virtue, that, since his time, the open violation of decency has always been considered among us as the mark of a fool. And this revolution, the greatest and most salutary ever effected by any satirist, he accomplished, be it remembered, without writing one personal lampoon.

90. In the early contributions of Addison to the Tatler his peculiar powers were not fully exhibited. Yet from the first, his superiority to all his coadjutors was evident. Some of his later Tatlers are fully equal to any thing that he ever wrote. Among the portraits, we most admire Tom Folio, Ned Softly, and the Political Upholsterer. The proceedings of the Court of Honour, the Thermometer of Zeal, the story of the Frozen Words, the Memoirs of the Shilling,[5] are excellent specimens of that ingenious

[1] Sir George Etherege (1636–1695), William Wycherley (1640–1715), both typical dramatists of the period.

[2] Sir Matthew Hale (1609–1676), lord chief justice of England in 1671, author of *Contemplations Moral and Divine.*

[3] A famous theological writer of the seventeenth century.

[4] Sir John Vanbrugh (1666–1726), an English dramatist and architect. He built Blenheim, the house of the Duke of Marlborough near Oxford.

[5] Nos. 158, 163, 250–265, 254, 249, and 220.

and lively species of fiction in which Addison excelled all men. There is one still better paper of the same class. But though that paper, a hundred and thirty-three years ago, was probably thought as edifying as one of Smalridge's[1] sermons, we dare not indicate it to the squeamish readers of the nineteenth century.

91. During the session of Parliament which commenced in November, 1709, and which the impeachment of Sacheverell has made memorable, Addison appears to have resided in London. The Tatler was now more popular than any periodical paper had ever been ; and his connection with it was generally known. It was not known, however, that almost every thing good in the Tatler was his. The truth is, that the fifty or sixty numbers which we owe to him were not merely the best, but so decidedly the best that any five of them are more valuable than all the two hundred numbers in which he had no share.

92. He required, at this time, all the solace which he could derive from literary success. The Queen had always disliked the Whigs. She had during some years disliked the Marlborough family. But, reigning by a disputed title,[2] she could not venture directly to oppose herself to a majority of both Houses of Parliament ; and, engaged as she was in a war on the event of which her own Crown was staked, she could not venture to disgrace a great and successful general. But at length, in the year 1710, the causes which had restrained her from showing her aversion to the Low Church party ceased to operate. The trial of Sacheverell[3] produced an outbreak of public feeling

§§ 92–96. *Downfall of the Whigs ; shock to Addison's fortunes.*

[1] A bishop and noted scholar of Addison's time.

[2] She was not the heir by inheritance strictly, her title depending on the Act of Parliament which settled the succession on William III., herself, and her heirs (1689).

[3] See Introduction, § 23.

scarcely less violent than the outbreaks which we can ourselves remember in 1820, and 1831.[1] The country gentlemen, the country clergymen, the rabble of the towns, were all, for once, on the same side. It was clear that, if a general election took place before the excitement abated, the Tories would have a majority. The services of Marlborough had been so splendid that they were no longer necessary. The Queen's throne was secure from all attack on the part of Lewis. Indeed, it seemed much more likely that the English and German armies would divide the spoils of Versailles and Marli[2] than that a Marshal of France would bring back the Pretender[3] to St. James's.[4] The Queen, acting by the advice of Harley, determined to dismiss her servants. In June the change commenced. Sunderland was the first who fell. The Tories exulted over his fall. The Whigs tried, during a few weeks, to persuade themselves that her Majesty had acted only from personal dislike to the Secretary, and that she meditated no further alteration. But, early in August, Godolphin was surprised by a letter from Anne, which directed him to break his white staff.[5] Even after this event, the irresolution or dissimulation of Harley kept up the hopes of the

[1] The agitations preceding Catholic emancipation and parliamentary reform.

[2] The palaces of Louis XIV.

[3] The Pretender, the name of that day for James III., the son of the exiled James II., who pretended by right of birth to the English throne.

[4] St. James's Palace, built by Henry VIII., is no longer occupied by the sovereign, though it gives the official title to the English Court.

[5] The staff was a sign of authority, used in many offices in the middle ages. *Cf.* the "pastoral staff" of the bishops. To break the staff was a sign of renunciation of office, as "to give the staff" was a formal installation into office.

Compare Shakespeare, Richard II., II., 2, 59.

. . . . "The Earl of Worcester
"Hath broke his staff, resigned his stewardship."

Whigs during another month; and then the ruin became rapid and violent. The Parliament was dissolved. The Ministers were turned out. The Tories were called to office. The tide of popularity ran violently in favour of the High Church party. That party, feeble in the late House of Commons, was now irresistible. The power which the Tories had thus suddenly acquired, they used with blind and stupid ferocity. The howl which the whole pack set up for prey and for blood appalled even him who had roused and unchained them. When, at this distance of time, we calmly review the conduct of the discarded ministers, we cannot but feel a movement of indignation at the injustice with which they were treated. No body of men had ever administered the government with more energy, ability, and moderation; and their success had been proportioned to their wisdom. They had saved Holland and Germany. They had humbled France. They had, as it seemed, all but torn Spain from the House of Bourbon. They had made England the first power in Europe. At home they had united England and Scotland. They had respected the rights of conscience and the liberty of the subject. They retired, leaving their country at the height of prosperity and glory.[1] And yet they were pursued to their retreat by such a roar of obloquy as was never raised against the government which threw away thirteen colonies,[2] or against the government which sent a gallant army to perish in the ditches of Walcheren.[3]

93. None of the Whigs suffered more in the general wreck than Addison. He had just sustained some heavy pecuniary losses, of the nature of which we are imperfectly

[1] See Introduction, § 23.

[2] Lord North's ministry (1770–1782).

[3] The Portland ministry, 1809. The Walcheren expedition was a futile attempt to destroy the fortifications of Antwerp during the war with France.

informed, when his Secretaryship was taken from him. He had reason to believe that he should also be deprived of the small Irish office which he held by patent. He had just resigned his Fellowship. It seems probable that he had already ventured to raise his eyes to a great lady,[1] and that, while his political friends were in power, and while his own fortunes were rising, he had been, in the phrase of the romances which were then fashionable, permitted to hope. But Mr. Addison the ingenious writer, and Mr. Addison the chief Secretary, were, in her ladyship's opinion, two very different persons. All these calamities united, however, could not disturb the serene cheerfulness of a mind conscious of innocence, and rich in its own wealth. He told his friends, with smiling resignation, that they ought to admire his philosophy, that he had lost at once his fortune, his place, his fellowship, and his mistress, that he must think of turning tutor again, and yet that his spirits were as good as ever.

94. He had one consolation. Of the unpopularity which his friends had incurred, he had no share. Such was the esteem with which he was regarded that, while the most violent measures were taken for the purpose of forcing Tory members on Whig corporations, he was returned to Parliament without even a contest. Swift, who was now in London, and who had already determined on quitting the Whigs, wrote to Stella in these remarkable words: "The Tories carry it among the new members six to one. Mr. Addison's election has passed easy and undisputed; and I believe if he had a mind to be king, he would hardly be refused."

95. The good will with which the Tories regarded Addison is the more honourable to him, because it had not been purchased by any concession on his part. During the general election he published a political Journal, en-

[1] The Countess of Warwick, whom he afterwards married.

titled the Whig Examiner. Of that Journal it may be sufficient to say that Johnson, in spite of his strong political prejudices, pronounced it to be superior in wit to any of Swift's writings on the other side. When it ceased to appear, Swift, in a letter to Stella, expressed his exultation at the death of so formidable an antagonist. "He might well rejoice," says Johnson, "at the death of that which he could not have killed." "On no occasion," he adds, "was the genius of Addison more vigorously exerted, and on none did the superiority of his powers more evidently appear."

96. The only use which Addison appears to have made of the favour with which he was regarded by the Tories was to save some of his friends from the general ruin of the Whig party. He felt himself to be in a situation which made it his duty to take a decided part in politics. But the case of Steele and of Ambrose Phillipps was different. For Phillipps, Addison even condescended to solicit, with what success we have not ascertained. Steele held two places. He was Gazetteer, and he was also a Commissioner of Stamps.[1] The Gazette was taken from him.[2] But he was suffered to retain his place in the Stamp Office, on an implied understanding that he should not be active against the new government; and he was, during more than two years, induced by Addison to observe this armistice with tolerable fidelity.

[1] Not postage stamps, which of course were not yet invented, but government revenue-stamps, a means of raising taxes very popular under William and Mary, and in use throughout the eighteenth century. *Cf.* the celebrated Stamp Act of 1765, the first occasion of quarrel with the American colonies. The stamp, sometimes adhesive, sometimes embossed, was affixed by the officials to papers, parchments, legal documents, and so forth. The fees charged were given to the government. The stamp office issued the stamps and received the taxes.

[2] This place was then a government appointment under the immediate control of the secretary of state, and changing as he was changed.

97. Isaac Bickerstaff accordingly became silent upon politics, and the article of news, which had once formed about one third of his paper, altogether disappeared. The Tatler had completely changed its character. It was now nothing but a series of essays on books, morals, and manners. Steele therefore resolved to bring it to a close, and to commence a new work on an improved plan. It was announced that this new work would be published daily. The undertaking was generally regarded as bold, or rather rash; but the event amply justified the confidence with which Steele relied on the fertility of Addison's genius. On the second of January, 1711, appeared the last Tatler. At the beginning of March following appeared the first of an incomparable series of papers, containing observations on life and literature by an imaginary Spectator.

98. The Spectator himself was conceived and drawn by Addison; and it is not easy to doubt that the portrait was meant to be in some features a likeness of the painter. The Spectator is a gentleman who, after passing a studious youth at the university, has travelled on classic ground, and has bestowed much attention on curious points of antiquity. He has, on his return, fixed his residence in London, and has observed all the forms of life which are to be found in that great city, has daily listened to the wits of Will's, has smoked with the philosophers of the Grecian, and has mingled with the parsons at Child's, and with the politicians at the St. James's. In the morning, he often listens to the hum of the Exchange; in the evening, his face is constantly to be seen in the pit of Drury Lane theatre. But an insurmountable bashfulness prevents him from opening his mouth, except in a small circle of intimate friends.

99. These friends were first sketched by Steele. Four of the club, the templar, the clergyman, the soldier, and

the merchant, were uninteresting figures, fit only for a background. But the other two, an old country baronet and an old town rake, though not delineated with a very delicate pencil, had some good strokes. Addison took the rude outlines into his own hands, retouched them, coloured them, and is in truth the creator of the Sir Roger de Coverley and the Will Honeycomb with whom we are all familiar.

100. The plan of the Spectator must be allowed to be both original and eminently happy. Every valuable essay in the series may be read with pleasure separately; yet the five or six hundred essays form a whole, and a whole which has the interest of a novel. It must be remembered, too, that at that time no novel, giving a lively and powerful picture of the common life and manners of England, had appeared. Richardson[1] was working as a compositor. Fielding[2] was robbing birds' nests. Smollett[3] was not yet born. The narrative, therefore, which connects together the Spectator's Essays, gave to our ancestors their first taste of an exquisite and untried pleasure. That narrative was indeed constructed with no art or labour. The events were such events as occur every day. Sir Roger comes up to town to see Eugenio, as the worthy baronet always calls Prince Eugene, goes with the Spectator on the water to Spring Gardens,[4] walks among the tombs in the Abbey,[4] and is frightened by the Mohawks,[4] but conquers his apprehen-

[1] Samuel Richardson (1689–1781), bred a printer, became the author of one of the most popular novels in English, *Pamela or Virtue Rewarded*.

[2] Henry Fielding (1707–1754), the author of *Tom Jones*, was born in Somersetshire, the son of a country gentleman.

[3] Tobias Smollett (1721–1771), born in Scotland. These are the first of the great line of English novelists, extending through two centuries in a brilliant array such as no other country can show.

[4] Spring Gardens, a place of refreshment in St. James's Park, much

sion so far as to go to the theatre when the Distressed Mother is acted. The Spectator pays a visit in the summer to Coverley Hall, is charmed with the old house, the old butler, and the old chaplain, eats a jack[1] caught by Will Wimble, rides to the assizes,[2] and hears a point of law discussed by Tom Touchy. At last a letter from the honest butler brings to the club the news that Sir Roger is dead. Will Honeycomb marries and reforms at sixty. The club breaks up; and the Spectator resigns his functions. Such events can hardly be said to form a plot; yet they are related with such truth, such grace, such wit, such humour, such pathos, such knowledge of the human heart, such knowledge of the ways of the world, that they charm us on the hundredth perusal. We have not the least doubt that if Addison had written a novel, on an extensive plan, it would have been superior to any that we possess. As it is, he is entitled to be considered not only as the greatest of the English essayists, but as the forerunner of the great English novelists.

101. We say this of Addison alone; for Addison is the Spectator. About three sevenths of the work are his; and it is no exaggeration to say, that his worst essay is as good as the best essay of any of his coadjutors. His best essays approach near to absolute perfection; nor is their excellence more wonderful than their variety. His invention never seems to flag; nor is he ever under the necessity of repeating himself, or of wearing out a subject. There are

frequented by the aristocracy of the seventeenth century. The Abbey is of course Westminster. Mohawks was a slang term for the wild young gentlemen of that time, when they sallied out in bands at night, perpetrating ruffian jokes and outrages on peaceful citizens. See § 148.

[1] A pickerel.

[2] The word means a "sitting" of legislative bodies at courts of justice; used commonly, as here, to indicate the sittings of the justices of the peace.

no dregs in his wine. He regales us after the fashion of that prodigal nabob[1] who held that there was only one good glass in a bottle. As soon as we have tasted the first sparkling foam of a jest, it is withdrawn, and a fresh draught of nectar is at our lips. On the Monday we have an allegory as lively and ingenious as Lucian's Auction of Lives[2]; on the Tuesday an Eastern apologue, as richly coloured as the Tales of Scherezade,[3] on the Wednesday, a character described with the skill of La Bruyère[4]; on the Thursday, a scene from common life, equal to the best chapters in the Vicar of Wakefield; on the Friday, some sly Horatian[5] pleasantry on fashionable follies, on hoops, patches, or puppet shows; and on the Saturday a religious meditation, which will bear a comparison with the finest passages in Massillon.[6]

102. It is dangerous to select where there is so much that deserves the highest praise. We will venture, however, to say, that any person who wishes to form a just notion of the extent and variety of Addison's powers, will do well to read at one sitting the following papers, the two Visits to the Abbey, the Visit to the Exchange, the Journal of the Retired Citizen, the Vision of Mirza, the Transmigrations of Pug the Monkey, and the Death of Sir Roger de Coverley.[7]

[1] Nabob, from the Hindu word for viceroy. It was applied colloquially to any Englishman who had made money in India.

[2] Lucian (240–312 A.D.), a brilliant Greek writer of dialogues and stories.

[3] The story-teller in the *Arabian Nights*.

[4] Jean de La Bruyère (1645–1696), a writer on morals. His greatest work is a series of sketches of the forms of human character, *Les Caractères*.

[5] As in the satires of Horace.

[6] A famous French preacher of the early eighteenth century.

[7] Nos. 26, 329, 69, 317, 159, 343, 517. These papers are all in the first seven volumes. The eighth must be considered as a separate work.

103. The least valuable of Addison's contributions to the Spectator are, in the judgment of our age, his critical papers. Yet his critical papers are always luminous, and often ingenious. The very worst of them must be regarded as creditable to him, when the character of the school in which he had been trained is fairly considered. The best of them were much too good for his readers. In truth, he was not so far behind our generation as he was before his own. No essays in the Spectator were more censured and derided than those in which he raised his voice against the contempt with which our fine old ballads were regarded, and showed the scoffers that the same gold which, burnished and polished, gives lustre to the Æneid and the Odes of Horace, is mingled with the rude dross of Chevy Chace.[1]

104. It is not strange that the success of the Spectator should have been such as no similar work has ever obtained. The number of copies daily distributed was at first three thousand. It subsequently increased, and had risen to near four thousand when the stamp tax was imposed. That tax was fatal to a crowd of journals. The Spectator, however, stood its ground, doubled its price, and, though its circulation fell off, still yielded a large revenue both to the state and to the authors. For particular papers, the demand was immense; of some, it is said, twenty thousand copies were required. But this was not all. To have the Spectator served up every morning with the bohea[2] and rolls, was a luxury for the few. The majority were content to wait till essays enough had appeared to form a volume. Ten thousand copies of each volume were imme-

[1] The famous old English ballad, recounting the events of the battle of Otterburn.

[2] Bohea, name of some hills in China from which tea was first imported to England in 1666. A general name in use for tea in Addison's time.

diately taken off, and new editions were called for. It must be remembered, that the population of England was then hardly a third of what it now is. The number of Englishmen who were in the habit of reading, was probably not a sixth of what it now is. A shop-keeper or a farmer who found any pleasure in literature, was a rarity. Nay, there was doubtless more than one knight of the shire whose country seat did not contain ten books, receipt books and books on farriery included. In these circumstances, the sale of the Spectator must be considered as indicating a popularity quite as great as that of the most successful works of Sir Walter Scott and Mr. Dickens[1] in our own time.

105. At the close of 1712 the Spectator ceased to appear. It was probably felt that the shortfaced gentleman and his club had been long enough before the town; and that it was time to withdraw them, and to replace them by a new set of characters. In a few weeks the first number of the Guardian was published. But the Guardian was unfortunate both in its birth and in its death. It began in dulness, and disappeared in a tempest of faction. The original plan was bad. Addison contributed nothing till sixty-six numbers had appeared; and it was then impossible to make the Guardian what the Spectator had been. Nestor Ironside and the Miss Lizards were people to whom even he could impart no interest. He could only furnish some excellent little essays, both serious and comic; and this he did.

106. Why Addison gave no assistance to the Guardian,

§§ 106–113. *Cato.*

[1] The *Pickwick Papers*, which gave Dickens his great fame, appeared in 1837. *Nicholas Nickleby*, *Oliver Twist*, and *American Notes* had appeared before this essay was written. Scott died in 1832. Both these authors were at the height of their popularity when Macaulay wrote this.

during the first two months of its existence, is a question which has puzzled the editors and biographers, but which seems to us to admit of a very easy solution. He was then engaged in bringing his Cato on the stage.

107. The first four acts of this drama had been lying in his desk since his return from Italy. His modest and sensitive nature shrank from the risk of a public and shameful failure; and, though all who saw the manuscript were loud in praise, some thought it possible that an audience might become impatient even of very good rhetoric, and advised Addison to print the play without hazarding a representation. At length, after many fits of apprehension, the poet yielded to the urgency of his political friends, who hoped that the public would discover some analogy between the followers of Cæsar and the Tories, between Sempronius[1] and the apostate Whigs, between Cato, struggling to the last for the liberties of Rome, and the band of patriots who still stood firm round Halifax and Wharton.

108. Addison gave the play to the managers of Drury Lane theatre, without stipulating for any advantage to himself. They, therefore, thought themselves bound to spare no cost in scenery and dresses. The decorations, it is true, would not have pleased the skilful eye of Mr. Macready.[2] Juba's[3] waistcoat blazed with gold lace; Marcia's[4] hoop was worthy of a Duchess on the birthday; and Cato wore a whig worth fifty guineas. The prologue was written by Pope, and is undoubtedly a dignified and spirited composition. The part of the hero was excellently

[1] Not an historical character.

[2] William Macready (1793–1873), a noted actor, manager of the Drury Lane Theatre, when this essay was written; the Henry Irving of his day.

[3] King of Numidia in Africa, ally of Pompey; defeated at Thapsus, 46 B.C. by Cæsar. Another character in the play.

[4] Marcia, Cato's daughter.

played by Booth. Steele undertook to pack a house. The boxes were in a blaze with the stars[1] of the Peers in Opposition.[2] The pit[3] was crowded with attentive and friendly listeners from the Inns of Court[4] and the literary coffeehouses. Sir Gilbert Heathcote, Governor of the Bank of England,[5] was at the head of a powerful body of auxiliaries from the city, warm[6] men and true Whigs, but better known at Jonathan's and Garraway's[7] than in the haunts of wits and critics.

109. These precautions were quite superfluous. The Tories, as a body, regarded Addison with no unkind feelings. Nor was it for their interest, professing, as they did, profound reverence for law and prescription,[8] and abhorrence both of popular insurrections and of standing armies, to appropriate to themselves reflections thrown on the great military chief[9] and demagogue, who, with the support of the legions and of the common people, subverted all the ancient institutions of his country. Accordingly, every shout that was raised by the members of the Kit Cat was echoed by the High Churchmen of the Octo-

[1] The badges of many of the honorary orders which enroll the sovereigns and nobility of the old world are shaped like stars.

[2] Nobles belonging to the party not in power. Here the phrase means the Whig Peers. A peer is one who holds one of the five degrees of nobility, duke, marquis, earl, viscount, baron.

[3] That part of the theatre on the floor of the house; in the United States, always called the parquet or orchestra.

[4] An Inn is in this sense a college building where students are taught. The Inns of Court are old corporations which have the privilege of making lawyers.

[5] See Introduction, § 25.

[6] Warm, colloquially used in Addison's time for "pretty well off," moderately rich.

[7] See Introduction, § 29.

[8] Prescription, rights at law secured by long-continued possession.

[9] Julius Cæsar, who might be supposed to typify Marlborough. See Introduction, § 26.

ber[1]; and the curtain at length fell amidst thunders of unanimous applause.

110. The delight and admiration of the town were described by the Guardian in terms which we might attribute to partiality, were it not that the Examiner, the organ of the Ministry, held similar language. The Tories, indeed, found much to sneer at in the conduct of their opponents. Steele had on this, as on other occasions, shown more zeal than taste or judgment. The honest citizens who marched under the orders of Sir Gibby,[2] as he was facetiously called, probably knew better when to buy and when to sell stock than when to clap and when to hiss at a play, and incurred some ridicule by making the hypocritical Sempronius their favourite, and by giving to his insincere rants louder plaudits than they bestowed on the temperate eloquence of Cato. Wharton, too, who had the incredible effrontery to applaud the lines about flying from prosperous vice and from the power of impious men to a private station, did not escape the sarcasms of those who justly thought that he could fly from nothing more vicious or impious than himself. The epilogue,[3] which was written by Garth,[4] a zealous Whig, was severely and not unreasonably censured as ignoble and out of place. But Addison was described, even by the bitterest Tory writers, as a gentleman of wit and virtue, in whose friendship many persons of both parties were happy, and whose name ought not to be mixed up with factious squabbles.

111. Of the jests by which the triumph of the Whig

[1] A club of extreme Tories, founded 1690, influential in the reign of Anne. See page 115, note 2, and Introduction § 29.

[2] Sir Gilbert Heathcote, mentioned in § 108.

[3] It used to be the fashion to have every new play introduced by a little poem or prologue, spoken by one of the characters, and ended by an epilogue, similarly given after the curtain.

[4] Sir Samuel Garth (1661-1719), an English physician and poet.

party was disturbed, the most severe and happy was Bolingbroke's. Between two acts, he sent for Booth to his box, and presented him, before the whole theatre, with a purse of fifty guineas for defending the cause of liberty so well against a perpetual Dictator. This was a pungent allusion to the attempt which Marlborough had made, not long before his fall, to obtain a patent[1] creating him Captain General for life.

112. It was April; and in April, a hundred and thirty years ago, the London season was thought to be far advanced. During a whole month, however, Cato was performed to overflowing houses, and brought into the treasury of the theatre twice the gains of an ordinary spring. In the summer the Drury Lane company went down to the Act[2] at Oxford, and there, before an audience which retained an affectionate remembrance of Addison's accomplishments and virtues, his tragedy was acted during several days. The gownsmen[3] began to besiege the theatre in the forenoon, and by one in the afternoon all the seats were filled.

113. About the merits of the piece which had so extraordinary an effect, the public, we suppose, has made up its mind. To compare it with the masterpieces of the Attic[4] stage, with the great English dramas of the time of Elizabeth, or even with the productions of Schiller's[5] manhood, would be absurd indeed. Yet it contains excellent dialogue and declamation, and, among plays fashioned on the French model, must be allowed to rank high; not indeed

[1] Patent, an official document conferring a privilege.

[2] Act, the old word for the public disputations required of candidates for degrees at the universities.

[3] Gownsmen, students at the university.

[4] Athenian.

[5] Friedrich von Schiller (1759–1805), the German poet, historian, and dramatist. Perhaps Macaulay refers to *Wallenstein*, *Mary Stuart*, and *William Tell*.

with Athalie, or Saul, but, we think, not below Cinna,[1] and certainly above any other English tragedy of the same school, above many of the plays of Corneille,[2] above many of the plays of Voltaire and Alfieri,[3] and above some plays of Racine. Be this as it may, we have little doubt that Cato did as much as the Tatlers, Spectators, and Freeholders united, to raise Addison's fame among his contemporaries.

114. The modesty and good nature of the successful dramatist had tamed even the malignity of faction. But literary envy, it should seem, is a fiercer passion than party spirit. It was by a zealous Whig that the fiercest attack on the Whig tragedy was made. John Dennis[4] published Remarks on Cato, which were written with some acuteness and with much coarseness and asperity. Addison neither defended himself nor retaliated. On many points he had an excellent defence; and nothing would have been easier than to retaliate; for Dennis had written bad odes, bad tragedies, bad comedies: he had, moreover, a larger share than most men of those infirmities and eccentricities which excite laughter; and Addison's power of turning either an absurd book or an absurd man into ridicule was unrivalled. Addison, however, serenely conscious of his superiority, looked with pity on his assailant, whose temper, naturally irritable and gloomy, had been soured by want, by controversy, and by literary failures.

115. But among the young candidates for Addison's favour there was one distinguished by talents from the

§§ 114–116. *The affair of John Dennis.*

[1] *Athalie* is by Racine; *Saul* by Alfieri; *Cinna* by Corneille. This odd pleasure in "ranking" and valuing authors is very characteristic of Macaulay. Compare *Essay on Milton*, §§ 28, and above, § 101.

Pierre Corneille (1606–1684), one of the classic French dramatists. His best known work is *Le Cid.*

[3] Alfieri (1749–1803), the most famous Italian tragedian. He wrote also five odes on *American Independence.*

[4] John Dennis (1637–1734), ridiculed by Pope as a critic.

rest, and distinguished, we fear, not less by malignity and insincerity. Pope was only twenty-five.[1] But his powers had expanded to their full maturity; and his best poem, the Rape of the Lock, had recently been published. Of his genius, Addison had always expressed high admiration. But Addison had early discerned, what might indeed have been discerned by an eye less penetrating than his, that the diminutive, crooked, sickly boy was eager to revenge himself on society for the unkindness of nature. In the Spectator, the Essay on Criticism had been praised with cordial warmth; but a gentle hint had been added, that the writer of so excellent a poem would have done well to avoid ill-natured personalities. Pope, though evidently more galled by the censure than gratified by the praise, returned thanks for the admonition, and promised to profit by it. The two writers continued to exchange civilities, counsel, and small good offices. Addison publicly extolled Pope's miscellaneous pieces; and Pope furnished Addison with a prologue. This did not last long. Pope hated Dennis, whom he had injured without provocation. The appearance of the Remarks on Cato gave the irritable poet an opportunity of venting his malice under the show of friendship; and such an opportunity could not but be welcome to a nature which was implacable in enmity, and which always preferred the tortuous to the straight path. He published, accordingly, the Narrative of the Frenzy of John Dennis. But Pope had mistaken his powers. He was a great master of invective and sarcasm: he could dissect a character in terse and sonorous couplets, brilliant with antithesis: but of dramatic talent he was altogether destitute. If he had written a lampoon on Dennis, such as that on Atticus, or that on Sporus,[2] the old grumbler

[1] See Introduction, § 36.

[2] A name given by Pope to Lord Hervey. Atticus is Pope's name for Addison. See Introduction, § 34.

would have been crushed. But Pope writing dialogue resembled—to borrow Horace's imagery and his own—a wolf, which, instead of biting, should take to kicking, or a monkey which should try to sting. The Narrative is utterly contemptible. Of argument there is not even the show; and the jests are such as, if they were introduced into a farce, would call forth the hisses of the shilling gallery. Dennis raves about the drama; and the nurse thinks that he is calling for a dram. "There is," he cries, "no peripetia[1] in the tragedy, no change of fortune, no change at all." "Pray, good Sir, be not angry," says the old woman; "I'll fetch change." This is not exactly the pleasantry of Addison.

116. There can be no doubt that Addison saw through this officious zeal, and felt himself deeply aggrieved by it. So foolish and spiteful a pamphlet could do him no good, and, if he were thought to have any hand in it, must do him harm. Gifted with incomparable powers of ridicule, he had never, even in self defence, used those powers inhumanly or uncourteously; and he was not disposed to let others make his fame and his interests a pretext under which they might commit outrages from which he had himself constantly abstained. He accordingly declared that he had no concern in the narrative, that he disapproved of it, and that if he answered the remarks, he would answer them like a gentleman; and he took care to communicate this to Dennis. Pope was bitterly mortified; and to this transaction we are inclined to ascribe the hatred with which he ever after regarded Addison.

117. In September, 1713, the Guardian ceased to appear. Steele had gone mad about politics. A general election

§§ 117-119. *The separation of Steele and Addison. The eighth volume of the Spectator.*

[1] Peripetia, a Greek word for that part of a drama where the plot is unravelled; the modern word is *dénouement*.

had just taken place: he had been chosen member for Stockbridge; and he fully expected to play a first part in Parliament. The immense success of the Tatler and Spectator had turned his head. He had been the editor of both those papers, and was not aware how entirely they owed their influence and popularity to the genius of his friend. His spirits, always violent, were now excited by vanity, ambition, and faction, to such a pitch that he every day committed some offence against good sense and good taste. All the discreet and moderate members of his own party regretted and condemned his folly. "I am in a thousand troubles," Addison wrote, "about poor Dick, and wish that his zeal for the public may not be ruinous to himself. But he has sent me word that he is determined to go on, and that any advice I may give him in this particular will have no weight with him."

118. Steele set up a political paper called the Englishman, which, as it was not supported by contributions from Addison, completely failed. By this work, by some other writings of the same kind, and by the airs which he gave himself at the first meeting of the new Parliament, he made the Tories so angry that they determined to expel him. The Whigs stood by him gallantly, but were unable to save him. The vote of expulsion was regarded by all dispassionate men as a tyrannical exercise of the power of the majority. But Steele's violence and folly, though they by no means justified the steps which his enemies took, had completely disgusted his friends; nor did he ever regain the place which he had held in the public estimation.

119. Addison about this time conceived the design of adding an eighth volume to the Spectator. In June, 1714, the first number of the new series appeared, and during about six months three papers were published weekly. Nothing can be more striking than the contrast between the Englishman and the eighth volume of the Spectator,

between Steele without Addison and Addison without Steele. The Englishman is forgotten; the eighth volume of the Spectator contains, perhaps, the finest essays, both serious and playful, in the English language.

120. Before this volume was completed, the death of Anne produced an entire change in the administration of public affairs. The blow fell suddenly. It found the Tory party distracted by internal feuds, and unprepared for any great effort. Harley had just been disgraced. Bolingbroke, it was supposed, would be the chief minister. But the Queen was on her deathbed before the white staff had been given, and her last public act was to deliver it with a feeble hand to the Duke of Shrewsbury.[1] The emergency produced a coalition between all sections of public men who were attached to the Protestant succession. George the First was proclaimed without opposition. A Council, in which the leading Whigs had seats, took the direction of affairs till the new King should arrive. The first act of the Lords Justices[2] was to appoint Addison their secretary.

121. There is an idle tradition that he was directed to prepare a letter to the King, that he could not satisfy himself as to the style of this composition, and that the Lords Justices called in a clerk who at once did what was wanted. It is not strange that a story so flattering to mediocrity should be popular; and we are sorry to deprive dunces of their consolation. But the truth must be told. It was well observed by Sir James Mackintosh,[3] whose knowledge of

§§ 120-128. *Death of Anne. Return of the Whigs to power. Addison goes into office. Conduct towards Swift and other friends.*

[1] See Introduction.

[2] Lords Justices, lords appointed to act for a time as substitutes for the sovereign in the supreme government in the whole kingdom or any part of it.

[3] Sir James Mackintosh (1765–1832) wrote a famous history of the English revolution of 1688. It was reviewed by Macaulay.

these times was unequalled, that Addison never, in any official document, affected wit or eloquence, and that his despatches are, without exception, remarkable for unpretending simplicity. Every body who knows with what ease Addison's finest essays were produced must be convinced that, if well turned phrases had been wanted, he would have had no difficulty in finding them. We are, however, inclined to believe, that the story is not absolutely without a foundation. It may well be that Addison did not know, till he had consulted experienced clerks who remembered the times when William the Third was absent on the continent, in what form a letter from the Council of Regency to the King ought to be drawn. We think it very likely that the ablest statesmen of our time, Lord John Russell, Sir Robert Peel, Lord Palmerston,[1] for example, would, in similar circumstances, be found quite as ignorant. Every office has some little mysteries which the dullest man may learn with a little attention, and which the greatest man cannot possibly know by intuition. One paper must be signed by the chief of the department; another by his deputy: to a third the royal sign manual[2] is necessary. One communication is to be registered, and another is not. One sentence must be in black ink, and another in red ink.

[1] Statesmen contemporary with the author and famous in the history of our century. Earl Russell (1792–1878), known as Lord John Russell till 1861, was the head of Macaulay's own party, the "Whigs of 1832," and lived to be Prime Minister twice, in 1846 and in 1866. His life greatly influenced the history of England of his time, especially in connection with parliamentary reform. Sir Robert Peel (1788–1850), the founder of the modern "Conservative" party, though a Tory prime minister, favored a liberal policy in regard to Catholic emancipation (1829) and free trade (1846), and carried his party with him. Lord Palmerston (1784–1865) made himself famous by supporting the revolutionary movements in Europe in 1848, bringing England out on the side of popular freedom. He also supported Napoleon III.

[2] Sign manual, autograph signature executed by a sovereign.

If the ablest Secretary for Ireland were moved to the India Board,[1] if the ablest President of the India Board were moved to the War Office, he would require instructions on points like these; and we do not doubt that Addison required such instruction when he became, for the first time, Secretary to the Lords Justices.

122. George the First took possession of his kingdom without opposition. A new ministry was formed, and a new Parliament favourable to the Whigs chosen. Sunderland[2] was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland; and Addison again went to Dublin as Chief Secretary.

123. At Dublin Swift resided; and there was much speculation about the way in which the Dean and the Secretary would behave towards each other. The relations which existed between these remarkable men form an interesting and pleasing portion of literary history. They had early attached themselves to the same political party and to the same patrons. While Anne's Whig ministry was in power, the visits of Swift to London and the official residence of Addison in Ireland had given them opportunities of knowing each other. They were the two shrewdest observers of their age. But their observations on each other had led them to favourable conclusions. Swift did full justice to the rare powers of conversation which were latent under the bashful deportment of Addison. Addison, on the other hand, discerned much good nature under the severe look and manner of Swift; and, indeed, the Swift of 1708 and the Swift of 1738 were two very different men.

124. But the paths of the two friends diverged widely. The Whig statesmen loaded Addison with solid benefits. They praised Swift, asked him to dinner, and did no-

[1] The India Board was a board of control established by the crown over the government of the East India Company.

[2] See Introduction, § 23.

thing more for him. His profession laid them under a difficulty. In the state they could not promote him; and they had reason to fear that, by bestowing preferment in the church on the author of the Tale of a Tub, they might give scandal to the public, which had no high opinion of their orthodoxy. He did not make fair allowance for the difficulties which prevented Halifax and Somers from serving him, thought himself an ill used man, sacrificed honour and consistency to revenge, joined the Tories, and became their most formidable champion. He soon found, however, that his old friends were less to blame than he had supposed. The dislike with which the Queen and the heads of the Church regarded him was insurmountable; and it was with the greatest difficulty that he obtained an ecclesiastical dignity of no great value, on condition of fixing his residence in a country which he detested.

125. Difference of political opinion had produced, not indeed a quarrel, but a coolness between Swift and Addison. They at length ceased altogether to see each other. Yet there was between them a tacit compact like that between the hereditary guests in the Iliad.

> Ἔγχεα δ' ἀλλήλων ἀλεώμεθα καὶ δι' ὁμίλου·
> Πολλοὶ μὲν γὰρ ἐμοὶ Τρῶες κλειτοί τ' ἐπίκουροι,
> Κτείνειν, ὃν κε θεὸς γε πόρῃ καὶ ποσσὶ κιχείω,
> Πολλοὶ δ' αὖ σοὶ Ἀχαιοὶ ἐναίρεμεν, ὃν κε δύνηαι.[1]

126. It is not strange that Addison, who calumniated and insulted nobody, should not have calumniated or insulted Swift. But it is remarkable that Swift, to whom

[1] The agreement of Glaucus the ally of Troy, and Diomed, the Greek, when they discovered that their fathers had been friends: "Let us avoid each other's spears hereafter in the battle; for there are many other Trojans and famous allies of theirs for me to slay, whomsoever of them God shall send, and with my feet I shall find; and on our side again there are many Greeks for you to destroy, whomsoever of them you can."—*Iliad*, VI., 226.

neither genius nor virtue was sacred, and who generally seemed to find, like most other renegades, a peculiar pleasure in attacking old friends, should have shown so much respect and tenderness to Addison.

127. Fortune had now changed. The accession of the House of Hanover had secured in England the liberties of the people, and in Ireland the dominion of the Protestant caste. To that caste Swift was more odious than any other man. He was hooted and even pelted in the streets of Dublin; and could not venture to ride along the strand for his health without the attendance of armed servants. Many whom he had formerly served now libelled and insulted him. At this time Addison arrived. He had been advised not to show the smallest civility to the Dean of St. Patrick's. He had answered, with admirable spirit, that it might be necessary for men whose fidelity to their party was suspected, to hold no intercourse with political opponents; but that one who had been a steady Whig in the worst times might venture, when the good cause was triumphant, to shake hands with an old friend who was one of the vanquished Tories. His kindness was soothing to the proud and cruelly wounded spirit of Swift; and the two great satirists resumed their habits of friendly intercourse.

128. Those associates of Addison whose political opinions agreed with his shared his good fortune. He took Tickell with him to Ireland. He procured for Budgell a lucrative place in the same kingdom. Ambrose Phillipps was provided for in England. Steele had injured himself so much by his eccentricity and perverseness that he obtained but a very small part of what he thought his due. He was, however, knighted; he had a place in the household; and he subsequently received other marks of favour from the court.

129. Addison did not remain long in Ireland. In 1715

he quitted his secretaryship for a seat at the Board of Trade.[1] In the same year his comedy of the Drummer was brought on the stage. The name of the author was not announced; the piece was coldly received; and some critics have expressed a doubt whether it were really Addison's. To us the evidence, both external and internal, seems decisive. It is not in Addison's best manner; but it contains numerous passages which no other writer known to us could have produced. It was again performed after Addison's death, and, being known to be his, was loudly applauded.

130. Towards the close of the year 1715, while the Rebellion[2] was still raging in Scotland, Addison published the first number of a paper called the Freeholder. Among his political works the Freeholder is entitled to the first place. Even in the Spectator there are few serious papers nobler than the character of his friend Lord Somers, and certainly no satirical papers superior to those in which the Tory fox-hunter is introduced.[3] This character is the original of Squire Western,[4] and is drawn with all Fielding's force, and with a delicacy of which Fielding was altogether destitute. As none of Addison's works exhibit stronger marks of his genius than the Freeholder, so none does more honour to his moral character. It is difficult to extol too highly the candour and humanity of a political writer whom even the excitement of civil war cannot hurry into unseemly violence. Oxford, it is well known, was then the stronghold of Toryism. The High Street had been repeatedly lined with bayonets in order to keep down the disaffected gownsmen; and traitors pursued by the messen-

[1] The English department of government controlling commerce. The head is called the president of the Board of Trade, and usually has a seat in the Cabinet.

[2] The uprising in the interest of the House of Stuart, under the Earl of Mar.

[3] See Nos. 22, 44 and 47.

[4] A character in Fielding's *Tom Jones*. See above, page 172, note 2.

gers of the Government had been concealed in the garrets of several colleges. Yet the admonition which, even under such circumstances, Addison addressed to the University, is singularly gentle, respectful, and even affectionate. Indeed, he could not find it in his heart to deal harshly even with imaginary persons. His foxhunter, though ignorant, stupid, and violent, is at heart a good fellow, and is at last reclaimed by the clemency of the King. Steele was dissatisfied with his friend's moderation, and, though he acknowledged that the Freeholder was excellently written, complained that the ministry played on a lute when it was necessary to blow the trumpet. He accordingly determined to execute a flourish after his own fashion, and tried to rouse the public spirit of the nation by means of a paper called the Town Talk, which is now as utterly forgotten as his Englishman, as his Crisis, as his Letter to the Bailiff of Stockbridge, as his Reader, in short, as everything that he wrote without the help of Addison.

131. In the same year in which the Drummer was acted, and in which the first numbers of the Freeholder appeared, the estrangement of Pope and Addison became complete. Addison had from the first seen that Pope was false and malevolent. Pope had discovered that Addison was jealous. The discovery was made in a strange manner. Pope had written the Rape of the Lock, in two cantos, without supernatural machinery. These two cantos had been loudly applauded, and by none more loudly than by Addison. Then Pope thought of the Sylphs and Gnomes, Ariel, Momentilla, Crispissa, and Umbriel, and resolved to interweave the Rosicrucian[1] mythology with the original fabric. He asked

§§ 131–147. *The quarrel between Addison and Pope.*

[1] A secret society, called the "Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross," is said to have existed in the seventeenth century, possessing occult wisdom derived from the Orient, and using strange words and symbols to express it. The current accounts of the brotherhood originated perhaps in attempts at mystification, but the word Rosicrucian was used to

Addison's advice. Addison said that the poem as it stood was a delicious little thing, and entreated Pope not to run the risk of marring what was so excellent in trying to mend it. Pope afterwards declared that this insidious counsel first opened his eyes to the baseness of him who gave it.

132. Now there can be no doubt that Pope's plan was most ingenious, and that he afterwards executed it with great skill and success. But does it necessarily follow that Addison's advice was bad? And if Addison's advice was bad, does it necessarily follow that it was given from bad motives? If a friend were to ask us whether we would advise him to risk his all in a lottery of which the chances were ten to one against him, we should do our best to dissuade him from running such a risk. Even if he were so lucky as to get the thirty thousand pound prize, we should not admit that we had counselled him ill; and we should certainly think it the height of injustice in him to accuse us of having been actuated by malice. We think Addison's advice good advice. It rested on a sound principle, the result of long and wide experience. The general rule undoubtedly is that, when a successful work of imagination has been produced, it should not be recast. We cannot at this moment call to mind a single instance in which this rule has been transgressed with happy effect, except the instance of the Rape of the Lock. Tasso recast his Jerusalem.[1] Akenside[2] recast his Pleasures of the Imagination,

glorify mystical acts and theories of many societies, claiming the authority of this secret order. The "mythology" here referred to is an elaborate hierarchy of elemental spirits, which were said to be the forces, physical and spiritual, at work in the world. See Goethe's *Faust* for some dreams of this sort.

[1] Tasso (1544–1595) wrote a great poem on the crusades, called *Jerusalem Delivered*. It was published at first as a poem called *Godfrey*, and he was always revising it, in a morbid fear least it was heretical.

[2] Mark Akenside (1721–1770), physician and poet.

and his Epistle to Curio. Pope himself, emboldened no doubt by the success with which he had expanded and remodelled the Rape of the Lock, made the same experiment on the Dunciad.[1] All these attempts failed. Who was to foresee that Pope would, once in his life, be able to do what he could not himself do twice, and what nobody else has ever done?

133. Addison's advice was good. But had it been bad, why should we pronounce it dishonest? Scott tells us that one of his best friends predicted the failure of Waverley. Herder[2] adjured Goethe not to take so unpromising a subject as Faust. Hume[3] tried to dissuade Robertson[4] from writing the History of Charles the Fifth. Nay, Pope himself was one of those who prophesied that Cato would never succeed on the stage, and advised Addison to print it without risking a representation. But Scott, Goethe, Robertson, Addison, had the good sense and generosity to give their advisers credit for the best intentions. Pope's heart was not of the same kind with theirs.

134. In 1715, while he was engaged in translating the Iliad, he met Addison at a coffeehouse. Phillipps and Budgell were there; but their sovereign got rid of them, and asked Pope to dine with him alone. After dinner, Addison said that he lay under a difficulty which he wished to explain. "Tickell," he said, "translated some time ago the first book of the Iliad. I have promised to look it over and correct it. I cannot therefore ask to see yours; for that would be double dealing." Pope made a civil re-

[1] A poem of Pope's, in imitation of the *Æneid*, about the kingdom of dulness, which he represented as peopled by many of his contemporaries.

[2] Herder (1744–1803), a German critic and poet of the classical period. His best known works are historical.

[3] Hume (1711–1776), the leader of eighteenth century philosophy in England, himself a great historian.

[4] See above, page 120, note 3.

ply, and begged that his second book might have the advantage of Addison's revision. Addison readily agreed, looked over the second book, and sent it back with warm commendations.

135. Tickell's version of the first book appeared soon after this conversation. In the preface, all rivalry was earnestly disclaimed. Tickell declared that he should not go on with the Iliad. That enterprise he should leave to powers which he admitted to be superior to his own. His only view, he said, in publishing this specimen was to bespeak the favour of the public to a translation of the Odyssey, in which he had made some progress.

136. Addison, and Addison's devoted followers, pronounced both the versions good, but maintained that Tickell's had more of the original. The town gave a decided preference to Pope's. We do not think it worth while to settle such a question of precedence. Neither of the rivals can be said to have translated the Iliad, unless, indeed, the word translation be used in the sense which it bears in the Midsummer Night's Dream. When Bottom makes his appearance with an ass's head instead of his own, Peter Quince exclaims, "Bless thee! Bottom, bless thee! thou art translated." In this sense, undoubtedly, the readers of either Pope or Tickell may very properly exclaim, "Bless thee! Homer; thou art translated indeed."

137. Our readers will, we hope, agree with us in thinking that no man in Addison's situation could have acted more fairly and kindly, both towards Pope, and towards Tickell, than he appears to have done. But an odious suspicion had sprung up in the mind of Pope. He fancied, and he soon firmly believed, that there was a deep conspiracy against his fame and his fortunes. The work on which he had staked his reputation was to be depreciated. The subscription, on which rested his hopes of a competence, was to be defeated. With this view Addison

had made a rival translation : Tickell had consented to father it ; and the wits of Button's had united to puff it.

138. Is there any external evidence to support this grave accusation ? The answer is short. There is absolutely none.

139. Was there any internal evidence which proved Addison to be the author of this version ? Was it a work which Tickell was incapable of producing? Surely not. Tickell was a Fellow of a College at Oxford, and must be supposed to have been able to construe the Iliad ; and he was a better versifier than his friend. We are not aware that Pope pretended to have discovered any turns of expression peculiar to Addison. Had such turns of expression been discovered, they would be sufficiently accounted for by supposing Addison to have corrected his friend's lines, as he owned that he had done.

140. Is there any thing in the character of the accused persons which makes the accusation probable ? We answer confidently—nothing. Tickell was long after this time described by Pope himself as a very fair and worthy man. Addison had been, during many years, before the public. Literary rivals, political opponents, had kept their eyes on him. But neither envy nor faction, in their utmost rage, had ever imputed to him a single deviation from the laws of honour and of social morality. Had he been indeed a man meanly jealous of fame, and capable of stooping to base and wicked arts for the purpose of injuring his competitors, would his vices have remained latent so long? He was a writer of tragedy: had he ever injured Rowe ? He was a writer of comedy : has he not done ample justice to Congreve, and given valuable help to Steele ? He was a pamphleteer: have not his good nature and generosity been acknowledged by Swift, his rival in fame and his adversary in politics ?

141. That Tickell should have been guilty of a villany

seems to us highly improbable. That Addison should have been guilty of a villany seems to us highly improbable. But that these two men should have conspired together to commit a villany seems to us improbable in a tenfold degree. All that is known to us of their intercourse tends to prove, that it was not the intercourse of two accomplices in crime. These are some of the lines in which Tickell poured forth his sorrow over the coffin of Addison :

> "Or dost thou warn poor mortals left behind,
> A task well suited to thy gentle mind ?
> Oh, if sometimes thy spotless form descend,
> To me thine aid, thou guardian genius, lend.
> When rage misguides me, or when fear alarms,
> When pain distresses, or when pleasure charms,
> In silent whisperings purer thoughts impart,
> And turn from ill a frail and feeble heart;
> Lead through the paths thy virtue trod before,
> Till bliss shall join, nor death can part us more."

142. In what words, we should like to know, did this guardian genius invite his pupil to join in a plan such as the Editor of the Satirist would hardly dare to propose to the Editor of the Age ?[1]

143. We do not accuse Pope of bringing an accusation which he knew to be false. We have not the smallest doubt that he believed it to be true ; and the evidence on which he believed it he found in his own bad heart. His own life was one long series of tricks, as mean and as malicious as that of which he suspected Addison and Tickell. He was all stiletto and mask. To injure, to insult, and to save himself from the consequences of injury and insult by lying and equivocating, was the habit of his life. He published a lampoon on the Duke of Chandos ; he was taxed with it ; and he lied and equivocated. He published a lampoon on Aaron Hill[2] ; he was taxed with it ; and he

[1] Contemporary journals. [2] An obscure poet.

lied and equivocated. He published a still fouler lampoon on Lady Mary Wortley Montague; he was taxed with it; and he lied with more than usual effrontery and vehemence. He puffed himself and abused his enemies under feigned names. He robbed himself of his own letters, and then raised the hue and cry after them. Besides his frauds of malignity, of fear, of interest, and of vanity, there were frauds which he seems to have committed from love of fraud alone. He had a habit of stratagem, a pleasure in outwitting all who came near him. Whatever his object might be, the indirect road to it was that which he preferred. For Bolingbroke, Pope undoubtedly felt as much love and veneration as it was in his nature to feel for any human being. Yet Pope was scarcely dead when it was discovered that, from no motive except the mere love of artifice, he had been guilty of an act of gross perfidy to Bolingbroke.

144. Nothing was more natural than that such a man as this should attribute to others that which he felt within himself. A plain, probable, coherent explanation is frankly given to him. He is certain that it is all a romance. A line of conduct scrupulously fair, and even friendly, is pursued towards him. He is convinced that it is merely a cover for a vile intrigue by which he is to be disgraced and ruined. It is vain to ask him for proofs. He has none, and wants none, except those which he carries in his own bosom.

145. Whether Pope's malignity at length provoked Addison to retaliate for the first and last time, cannot now be known with certainty. We have only Pope's story, which runs thus. A pamphlet appeared containing some reflections which stung Pope to the quick. What those reflections were, and whether they were reflections of which he had a right to complain, we have now no means of deciding. The Earl of Warwick, a foolish and vicious lad, who

regarded Addison with the feelings with which such lads generally regard their best friends, told Pope, truly or falsely, that this pamphlet had been written by Addison's direction. When we consider what a tendency stories have to grow, in passing even from one honest man to another honest man, and when we consider that to the name of honest man neither Pope nor the Earl of Warwick had a claim, we are not disposed to attach much importance to this anecdote.

146. It is certain, however, that Pope was furious. He had already sketched the character of Atticus in prose. In his anger he turned this prose into the brilliant and energetic lines which every body knows by heart, or ought to know by heart, and sent them to Addison. One charge which Pope had enforced with great skill is probably not without foundation. Addison was, we are inclined to believe, too fond of presiding over a circle of humble friends. Of the other imputations which these famous lines are intended to convey, scarcely one has ever been proved to be just, and some are certainly false. That Addison was not in the habit of "damning with faint praise" appears from innumerable passages in his writings, and from none more than from those in which he mentions Pope. And it is not merely unjust, but ridiculous, to describe a man who made the fortune of almost every one of his intimate friends, as "so obliging that he ne'er obliged."

147. That Addison felt the sting of Pope's satire keenly, we cannot doubt. That he was conscious of one of the weaknesses with which he was reproached, is highly probable. But his heart, we firmly believe, acquitted him of the gravest part of the accusation. He acted like himself. As a satirist he was, at his own weapons, more than Pope's match; and he would have been at no loss for topics. A distorted and diseased body, tenanted by a yet more distorted and diseased mind; spite and envy thinly disguised

by sentiments as benevolent and noble as those which Sir Peter Teazle admired in Mr. Joseph Surface[1]; a feeble sickly licentiousness; an odious love of filthy and noisome images; these were things which a genius less powerful than that to which we owe the Spectator could easily have held up to the mirth and hatred of mankind. Addison had, moreover, at his command other means of vengeance which a bad man would not have scrupled to use. He was powerful in the state. Pope was a Catholic; and, in those times, a minister would have found it easy to harass the most innocent Catholic by innumerable petty vexations. Pope, near twenty years later, said that "through the lenity of the government alone he could live with comfort." "Consider," he exclaimed, "the injury that a man of high rank and credit may do to a private person, under penal laws and many other disadvantages." It is pleasing to reflect that the only revenge which Addison took was to insert in the Freeholder a warm encomium on the translation of the Iliad, and to exhort all lovers of learning to put down their names as subscribers. There could be no doubt, he said, from the specimens already published, that the masterly hand of Pope would do as much for Homer as Dryden had done for Virgil. From that time to the end of his life, he always treated Pope, by Pope's own acknowledgment, with justice. Friendship was, of course, at an end.

148. One reason which induced the Earl of Warwick to play the ignominious part of talebearer on this occasion, may have been his dislike of the marriage which was about to take place between his mother and Addison. The Countess Dowager, a daughter of the old and honourable family of the Middletons of Chirk, a family which, in any country but ours, would be called noble, resided at Hol-

§§ 148–150. *Addison's marriage.*

[1] Characters in Sheridan's *School for Scandal.*

land House.[1] Addison had, during some years, occupied at Chelsea a small dwelling, once the abode of Nell Gwynn.[2] Chelsea[3] is now a district of London, and Holland House may be called a town residence. But, in the days of Anne and George the First, milkmaids and sportsmen wandered between green hedges and over fields bright with daisies, from Kensington almost to the shore of the Thames. Addison and Lady Warwick were country neighbours, and became intimate friends. The great wit and scholar tried to allure the young Lord from the fashionable amusements of beating watchmen, breaking windows, and rolling women in hogsheads down Holborn Hill to the study of letters and the practice of virtue. These well meant exertions did little good, however, either to the disciple or to the master. Lord Warwick grew up a rake; and Addison fell in love. The mature beauty of the Countess has been celebrated by poets in language which, after a very large allowance has been made for flattery, would lead us to believe that she was a fine woman; and her rank doubtless heightened her attractions. The courtship was long. The hopes of the lover appear to have risen and fallen with the fortunes of his party. His attachment was at length matter of such notoriety that, when he visited Ireland for the last time, Rowe addressed some consolatory verses to the Chloe[4] of Holland House. It strikes us as a little strange that, in these verses, Addison should be called Lycidas,[5] a name of

[1] A mansion in Kensington, afterwards very famous as the residence of Lord Holland. See Macaulay's *Life*, Chapter IV., and his Letter to his sister of May 30, 1831.

[2] Mistress of Charles II.

[3] Chelsea, a suburb of London on the banks of the Thames. It has been the residence of many great people, including Steele, Swift, Addison, Walpole, and in our time Rossetti, George Eliot, and Carlyle.

[4] A shepherdess in a Greek pastoral. This name was in fashion in eighteenth century poetry.

[5] See Introduction, § 10.

singularly evil omen for a swain just about to cross St. George's Channel.

149. At length Chloe capitulated. Addison was indeed able to treat with her on equal terms. He had reason to expect preferment even higher than that which he had attained. He had inherited the fortune of a brother who died Governor of Madras. He had purchased an estate in Warwickshire, and had been welcomed to his domain in very tolerable verse by one of the neighbouring squires, the poetical foxhunter, William Somervile. In August, 1716, the newspapers announced that Joseph Addison, Esquire, famous for many excellent works both in verse and prose, had espoused the Countess Dowager of Warwick.

150. He now fixed his abode at Holland House, a house which can boast of a greater number of inmates distinguished in political and literary history than any other private dwelling in England. His portrait still hangs there. The features are pleasing; the complexion is remarkably fair; but, in the expression, we trace rather the gentleness of his disposition than the force and keenness of his intellect.

151. Not long after his marriage he reached the height of civil greatness. The Whig Government had, during some time, been torn by internal dissensions. Lord Townshend[1] led one section of the Cabinet, Lord Sunderland the other. At length, in the spring of 1717, Sunderland triumphed. Townshend retired from office, and was accompanied by Walpole and Cowper. Sunderland proceeded to reconstruct the Ministry; and Addison was appointed Secretary of State. It is certain that the Seals[2]

§ 151–159. *He enters the Cabinet as Secretary of State. Failing health. Unhappy relations with Steele.*

[1] Charles Townshend (1674–1738), a member of a family of eminence in English politics. He began as a Tory, but became a Whig.

[2] State seals, used to give official authority to documents, are usually in charge of state secretaries. Hence they are used as a symbol of official authority.

were pressed upon him, and were at first declined by him. Men equally versed in official business might easily have been found; and his colleagues knew that they could not expect assistance from him in debate. He owed his elevation to his popularity, to his stainless probity, and to his literary fame.

152. But scarcely had Addison entered the Cabinet when his health began to fail. From one serious attack he recovered in the autumn; and his recovery was celebrated in Latin verses, worthy of his own pen, by Vincent Bourne, who was then at Trinity College, Cambridge. A relapse soon took place; and, in the following spring, Addison was prevented by a severe asthma from discharging the duties of his post. He resigned it, and was succeeded by his friend Craggs, a young man whose natural parts, though little improved by cultivation, were quick and showy, whose graceful person and winning manners had made him generally acceptable in society, and who, if he had lived, would probably have been the most formidable of all the rivals of Walpole.

153. As yet there was no Joseph Hume.[1] The Ministers, therefore, were able to bestow on Addison a retiring pension of fifteen hundred pounds a-year. In what form this pension was given we are not told by the biographers, and have not time to inquire. But it is certain that Addison did not vacate his seat in the House of Commons.

154. Rest of mind and body seemed to have re-established his health; and he thanked God, with cheerful piety, for having set him free both from his office and from his asthma. Many years seemed to be before him, and he meditated many works, a tragedy on the death of Socrates, a translation of the Psalms, a treatise on the evidences of

[1] A member of Parliament in Macaulay's time, who distinguished himself by objecting to unnecessary expenditures.

Christianity. Of this last performance, a part, which we could well spare, has come down to us.

155. But the fatal complaint soon returned, and gradually prevailed against all the resources of medicine. It is melancholy to think that the last months of such a life should have been overclouded both by domestic and by political vexations. A tradition which began early, which has been generally received, and to which we have nothing to oppose, has represented his wife as an arrogant and imperious woman. It is said that, till his health failed him, he was glad to escape from the Countess Dowager and her magnificent diningroom, blazing with the gilded devices of the House of Rich,[1] to some tavern where he could enjoy a laugh, a talk about Virgil and Boileau, and a bottle of claret, with the friends of his happier days. All those friends, however, were not left to him. Sir Richard Steele had been gradually estranged by various causes. He considered himself as one who, in evil times, had braved martyrdom for his political principles, and demanded, when the Whig party was triumphant, a large compensation for what he had suffered when it was militant. The Whig leaders took a very different view of his claims. They thought that he had, by his own petulance and folly, brought them as well as himself into trouble, and though they did not absolutely neglect him, doled out favours to him with a sparing hand. It was natural that he should be angry with them, and especially angry with Addison. But what above all seems to have disturbed Sir Richard, was the elevation of Tickell, who, at thirty, was made by Addison Undersecretary of State; while the Editor of the Tatler and Spectator, the author of the Crisis, the member for Stockbridge who had been persecuted for firm adherence to the House of Hanover, was, at near fifty, forced, after many solicitations and complaints, to content himself

[1] **Rich, the family name of her first husband, the Earl of Holland.**

with a share in the patent[1] of Drury Lane theatre. Steele himself says, in his celebrated letter to Congreve, that Addison, by his preference of Tickell, "incurred the warmest resentment of other gentlemen;" and every thing seems to indicate that, of those resentful gentlemen, Steele was himself one.

156. While poor Sir Richard was brooding over what he considered as Addison's unkindness, a new cause of quarrel arose. The Whig party, already divided against itself, was rent by a new schism. The celebrated Bill for limiting the number of Peers had been brought in. The proud Duke of Somerset, first in rank of all the nobles whose religion permitted them to sit in Parliament, was the ostensible author of the measure. But it was supported, and, in truth, devised by the Prime Minister.

157. We are satisfied that the Bill was most pernicious; and we fear that the motives which induced Sunderland to frame it were not honourable to him. But we cannot deny that it was supported by many of the best and wisest men of that age. Nor was this strange. The royal prerogative had, within the memory of the generation then in the vigour of life, been so grossly abused,[2] that it was still regarded with a jealousy which, when the peculiar situation of the House of Brunswick is considered, may perhaps be called immoderate. The particular prerogative of creating peers had, in the opinion of the Whigs, been grossly abused by Queen Anne's last ministry[3]; and even the Tories admitted that her Majesty, in swamping, as it has

[1] Giving him a share in the profits, as the theatre was a monopoly, licensed by the government.

[2] By James II., who tried to "dispense" his officers from their obligations to the law of the land by appealing to the "royal prerogative" as above the law.

[3] In 1711 Queen Anne created twelve new peers to obtain a Tory majority in the House of Lords.

since been called, the Upper House, had done what only an extreme case could justify. The theory of the English constitution, according to many high authorities, was that three independent powers, the sovereign, the nobility, and the commons, ought constantly to act as checks on each other. If this theory were sound, it seemed to follow that to put one of these powers under the absolute control of the other two, was absurd. But if the number of peers were unlimited, it could not well be denied that the Upper House was under the absolute control of the Crown and the Commons, and was indebted only to their moderation for any power which it might be suffered to retain.

158. Steele took part with the Opposition, Addison with the Ministers. Steele, in a paper called the Plebeian, vehemently attacked the bill. Sunderland called for help on Addison, and Addison obeyed the call. In a paper called the Old Whig, he answered, and indeed refuted, Steele's arguments. It seems to us that the premises of both the controversialists were unsound, that, on those premises, Addison reasoned well and Steele ill, and that consequently Addison brought out a false conclusion while Steele blundered upon the truth. In style, in wit, and in politeness, Addison maintained his superiority, though the Old Whig is by no means one of his happiest performances.

159. At first, both the anonymous opponents observed the laws of propriety. But at length Steele so far forgot himself as to throw an odious imputation on the morals of the chiefs of the administration. Addison replied with severity, but, in our opinion, with less severity than was due to so grave an offence against morality and decorum; nor did he, in his just anger, forget for a moment the laws of good taste and good breeding. One calumny which has been often repeated, and never yet contradicted, it is our duty to expose. It is asserted in the Biographia Britannica, that Addison designated Steele as "little Dicky."

This assertion was repeated by Johnson, who had never seen the Old Whig, and was therefore excusable. It has also been repeated by Miss Aikin, who has seen the Old Whig, and for whom therefore there is less excuse. Now, it is true that the words "little Dicky" occur in the Old Whig, and that Steele's name was Richard. It is equally true that the words "little Isaac" occur in the Duenna,[1] and that Newton's name was Isaac. But we confidently affirm that Addison's little Dicky had no more to do with Steele, than Sheridan's little Isaac with Newton. If we apply the words "little Dicky" to Steele, we deprive a very lively and ingenious passage, not only of all its wit, but of all its meaning.[2] Little Dicky was the nickname of Henry Norris, an actor of remarkably small stature, but of great humour, who played the usurer Gomez, then a most popular part, in Dryden's Spanish Friar.

160. The merited reproof which Steele had received, though softened by some kind and courteous expressions, galled him bitterly. He replied with little force and great acrimony; but no rejoinder appeared. Addison was fast

§§ 160–167. *Addison's death and burial.*

[1] A play of Sheridan's (1775).

[2] We will transcribe the whole paragraph. How it can ever have been misunderstood is unintelligible to us. "But our author's chief concern is for the poor House of Commons, whom he represents as naked and defenceless, when the Crown, by losing this prerogative, would be less able to protect them against the power of a House of Lords. Who forbears laughing when the Spanish Friar represents little Dicky, under the person of Gomez, insulting the Colonel that was able to fright him out of his wits with a single frown? This Gomez, says he, flew upon him like a dragon, got him down, the Devil being strong in him, and gave him bastinado on bastinado, and buffet on buffet, which the poor Colonel, being prostrate, suffered with a most Christian patience. The improbability of the fact never fails to raise mirth in the audience; and one may venture to answer for a British House of Commons, if we may guess, from its conduct hitherto, that it will scarce be either so tame or so weak as our author supposes." [*Macaulay's note.*]

hastening to his grave; and had, we may well suppose, little disposition to prosecute a quarrel with an old friend. His complaint had terminated in dropsy. He bore up long and manfully. But at length he abandoned all hope, dismissed his physicians, and calmly prepared himself to die.

161. His works he intrusted to the care of Tickell, and dedicated them a very few days before his death to Craggs, in a letter written with the sweet and graceful eloquence of a Saturday's Spectator. In this, his last composition, he alluded to his approaching end in words so manly, so cheerful, and so tender, that it is difficult to read them without tears. At the same time he earnestly recommended the interests of Tickell to the care of Craggs.

162. Within a few hours of the time at which this dedication was written, Addison sent to beg Gay,[1] who was then living by his wits about town, to come to Holland House. Gay went, and was received with great kindness. To his amazement his forgiveness was implored by the dying man. Poor Gay, the most goodnatured and simple of mankind, could not imagine what he had to forgive. There was, however, some wrong, the remembrance of which weighed on Addison's mind, and which he declared himself anxious to repair. He was in a state of extreme exhaustion; and the parting was doubtless a friendly one on both sides. Gay supposed that some plan to serve him had been in agitation at Court, and had been frustrated by Addison's influence. Nor is this improbable. Gay had paid assiduous court to the royal family. But in the Queen's days he had been the eulogist of Bolingbroke, and was still connected with many Tories. It is not strange that Addison, while heated by conflict, should have thought himself justified in obstructing the preferment of one whom he might regard

[1] John Gay (1685–1732), the English poet. The *Beggar's Opera*, his most famous work, is hardly known now; but his pastorals and fables are pleasing still.

as a political enemy. Neither is it strange that, when reviewing his whole life, and earnestly scrutinising all his motives, he should think that he had acted an unkind and ungenerous part, in using his power against a distressed man of letters, who was as harmless and as helpless as a child.

163. One inference may be drawn from this anecdote. It appears that Addison, on his deathbed, called himself to a strict account, and was not at ease till he had asked pardon for an injury which it was not even suspected that he had committed, for an injury which would have caused disquiet only to a very tender conscience. Is it not then reasonable to infer that, if he had really been guilty of forming a base conspiracy against the fame and fortunes of a rival, he would have expressed some remorse for so serious a crime? But it is unnecessary to multiply arguments and evidence for the defence, when there is neither argument nor evidence for the accusation.

164. The last moments of Addison were perfectly serene. His interview with his son-in-law is universally known. "See," he said, "how a Christian can die." The piety of Addison was, in truth, of a singularly cheerful character. The feeling which predominates in all his devotional writings is gratitude. God was to him the all-wise and allpowerful friend who had watched over his cradle with more than maternal tenderness; who had listened to his cries before they could form themselves in prayer; who had preserved his youth from the snares of vice; who had made his cup run over with worldly blessings; who had doubled the value of those blessings, by bestowing a thankful heart to enjoy them, and dear friends to partake them; who had rebuked the wave of the Ligurian gulf, had purified the autumnal air of the Campagna, and had restrained the avalanches of Mont Cenis.[1] Of the

[1] Referring to his escape from the dangers of foreign travel.

Psalms, his favourite was that which represents the Ruler of all things under the endearing image of a shepherd, whose crook guides the flock safe, through gloomy and desolate glens, to meadows well watered and rich with herbage. On that goodness to which he ascribed all the happiness of his life, he relied in the hour of death with the love which casteth out fear. He died on the seventeenth of June, 1719. He had just entered on his forty-eighth year.

165. His body lay in state in the Jerusalem Chamber,[1] and was borne thence to the Abbey at dead of night. The choir sang a funeral hymn. Bishop Atterbury,[2] one of those Tories who had loved and honoured the most accomplished of the Whigs, met the corpse, and led the procession by torchlight, round the shrine of Saint Edward and the graves of the Plantagenets, to the Chapel of Henry the Seventh.[3] On the north side of that Chapel, in the vault of the House of Albemarle, the coffin of Addison lies next to the coffin of Montague. Yet a few months; and the same mourners passed again along the same aisle. The same sad anthem was again chanted. The same vault was again opened; and the coffin of Craggs[4] was placed close to the coffin of Addison.

166. Many tributes were paid to the memory of Addison; but one alone is now remembered. Tickell bewailed his friend in an elegy which would do honour to the greatest name in our literature, and which unites the energy and magnificence of Dryden to the tenderness and purity of Cowper.[5] This fine poem was prefixed to a superb edi-

[1] Jerusalem Chamber, a room on the southwest side of Westminster Abbey, dating from 1376. It is hung with tapestry representing Jerusalem.

[2] Francis Atterbury (1662–1732), Dean of Westminster at this time.

[3] The eastern chapel of the Abbey.

[4] See § 152.

[5] William Cowper (1731–1800), the gentle poet whose verse

tion of Addison's works, which was published, in 1721, by subscription. The names of the subscribers proved how widely his fame had been spread. That his countrymen should be eager to possess his writings, even in a costly form, is not wonderful. But it is wonderful that, though English literature was then little studied on the continent, Spanish Grandees,[1] Italian Prelates, Marshals of France, should be found in the list. Among the most remarkable names are those of the Queen of Sweden,[2] of Prince Eugene, of the Grand Duke of Tuscany,[3] of the Dukes of Parma, Modena, and Guastalla,[4] of the Doge of Genoa, of the Regent Orleans,[5] and of Cardinal Dubois. We ought to add that this edition, though eminently beautiful, is in some important points defective; nor, indeed, do we yet possess a complete collection of Addison's writings.[6]

167. It is strange that neither his opulent and noble widow, nor any of his powerful and attached friends, should have thought of placing even a simple tablet, inscribed with his name, on the walls of the Abbey. It was not till

charms, even in comparison with the more magnificent poetry immediately following his death, at the end of the last century and beginning of this.

[1] The class of Spanish noblemen of the higher rank.

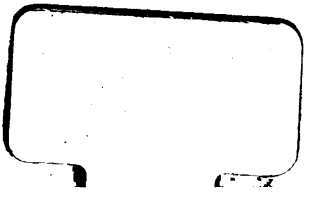
[2] Ulrica, sister and successor of Charles XII.

[3] The Medici family were still reigning as Grand Dukes. In 1737 the Duchy passed to the Austrian House of Hapsburg.

[4] States of Northern Italy. All these rulers, being on the English side in the War of Succession, were admirers of the English Whigs.

[5] During the minority of Louis XV. (1715–1723), Philip, Duke of Orleans, was Regent of France. He was nephew of Louis XIV., and a man of some ability, but most unscrupulous, an avowed infidel, and of dissolute life. He reversed the policy of France under Louis XIV., making a close alliance with England under George I., and cultivating the friendship of the Whigs. His favorite minister was Cardinal Dubois.

[6] The most accessible edition at present is the collection edited by Bishop Hurd, published in Bohn's Standard Library (Macmillan).

three generations had laughed and wept over his pages that the omission was supplied by the public veneration. At length, in our own time, his image, skilfully graven, appeared in Poet's Corner.[1] It represents him, as we can conceive him, clad in his dressing gown, and freed from his wig, stepping from his parlour at Chelsea into his trim little garden, with the account of the Everlasting Club, or the Loves of Hilpa and Shalum, just finished for the next day's Spectator, in his hand. Such a mark of national respect was due to the unsullied statesman, to the accomplished scholar, to the master of pure English eloquence, to the consummate painter of life and manners. It was due, above all, to the great satirist, who alone knew how to use ridicule without abusing it, who, without inflicting a wound, effected a great social reform, and who reconciled wit and virtue, after a long and disastrous separation, during which wit had been led astray by profligacy, and virtue by fanaticism.

[1] A space on the east side of the south transept of Westminster Abbey, containing busts, statues, or tablets to the memory of many British poets and other great men. A memorial to Longfellow, the American poet, also appears here.